









## T H E L I F E

OF

COMMODORE OLIVER HAZARD PERRY.

BY

ALEX. SLIDELL MACKENZIE, U.S.N.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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131

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CONTENTS  
OF  
THE SECOND VOLUME.

---

CHAPTER X.

	Page
<i>Perry returns to Detroit.—Joint Proclamations of Harrison and Perry.—Reception throughout the United States of the News of the Victory.—Letter from the Secretary of the Navy.—Authorized to Parole Barclay.—Promoted to Post-captaincy.—Leave to return to Newport.—Sails for Put-in Bay.—Receives Barclay.—Arrives at Erie.—Reception there.—No Notice taken of Captain Elliott.—His Discontent.—Complains to General Harrison.—Interview between Perry and Captain Elliott.—Perry's Departure from Erie.—Captain Elliott's Efforts to obtain Certificates.—Letter from the Officers of the Niagara.—Certificate from Lieutenant Turner.—Mr. Magrath's Publication.—Overtures to Messrs. Macdonald, Brownell, and Champlin.—Overtures to British Officers.—Reasons assigned by Captain Elliott for their Hostility.—Story of throwing overboard Motto-flag.—Duels.—Difficulties among Crews.—Barclay's Feelings towards Perry . . . . .</i>	9

## CHAPTER XI.

	Page
<i>Perry's Homeward Journey.—Reception in the Villages.—At Utica.—Schenectady.—Albany.—Memoir of Alexander Perry.—Reception in Connecticut.—Providence.—Newport.—Visits New-York.—Entertainments.—President's Notice of the Battle.—Honours and Rewards from Congress.—Prize Money.—Visit to Washington.—Reception.—Entertainment at Baltimore.—Honours from Pennsylvania.—Return to Newport.—Visit to Boston.—Review.—Entertainment.—Affair of the Nimrod.—Appointed to the Java.—Burning of Washington.—Perry commands a Battery on the Potomac.—Annoys the Enemy in their Descent.—Attack on Baltimore.—Equipment of Flying Squadrons.—Perry Appointed to One.—Instructions for his Cruise.—Peace with England . . . .</i>	52

## CHAPTER XII.

*Algerine Hostilities.—Congress declares War.—Decatur sent to the Mediterranean.—Prosecutes the War vigorously.—Makes Peace.—Perry resumes Command of the Java.—Sails from Baltimore.—Proceeds to New-York.—Project of a Voyage of Discovery.—Perry declines subordinate Employment in it.—Java ordered to the Mediterranean.—Touches at Newport.—Boisterous Passage.—*

<i>A Man overboard. — Main-topmast carried away. — Arrival at Malaga. — At Mahon. — Squadron visits Algiers. — Our threatened Hostilities. — Perry's Interview with the Dey. — Pacific Termination. — Tripoli. — Syracuse. — Messina. — Palermo. — Tunis. — Gibraltar. — Arrival of Commodore Chauncey. — Naples. — Courts Martial. — Messina. — Difficulty with Heath. — Tripoli. — Tunis. — Algiers. — Lieutenant Forrest rescued from Drowning. — Gibraltar. — Mahon. — Trials of Perry and Heath. — Return Home. — Smallpox. — Treatment of Sick. — Perry resumes Command at Newport. — Tribute of Respect from Officers .</i>	<i>93</i>
--	-----------

## CHAPTER XIII.

<i>Perry employed on Surveys. — Revival of his Difficulty with Captain Heath. — Assailed by the Press. — He determines to meet him. — Refuses to return his Fire. — Hostile Demonstration of Captain Elliott. — Perry's Forbearance. — Correspondence between Captain Elliott and Perry. — Perry prefers Charges against Captain Elliott. — Not acted on by the Government. — Captain Heath challenges Perry. — Is arrested in Rhode Island. — Perry proceeds to Washington. — Returns to New-York. — Duel between Perry and Heath . .</i>	<i>151</i>
--	------------

## CHAPTER XIV.

	Page
<i>Comfortable situation of Perry. — Ordered to South America. — Object of Mission. — Proceeds to Washington. — Receives Instructions from State Department. — Repairs to Annapolis. — Hoists his flag on board the John Adams. — Joined by Schooner Nonsuch. — Sails for the Orinoco. — Arrives off Barbadoes. — Enters Orinoco. — Arrival at Angostura. — Commencement of his Negotiations. — Unfavourable Feelings towards the United States. — Extracts from Perry's Note-book. — Partially succeeds in his Mission. — Departure from Angostura. — Attacked with Yellow Fever. — Dies. — Is buried in Port Spain. — Impression caused by his Death. — His Family provided for. — Remains removed to Newport. — His Character . . . . .</i>	184



# OLIVER HAZARD PERRY.

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## CHAPTER X.

*Perry returns to Detroit.—Joint Proclamations of Harrison and Perry.—Reception of the News of the Victory. — Letter from the Secretary of the Navy.—Authorized to Parole Barclay.—Promoted to Post-captaincy.—Leave to return to Newport.—Sails for Put-in Bay.—Receives Barclay.—Arrives at Erie.—Reception there.—No Notice taken of Elliott.—His Discontent.—Complains to General Harrison. — Interview between Perry and Elliott.—Perry's Departure from Erie.—Elliott's Efforts to obtain Certificates.—Letter from the Officers of the Niagara.—Certificate from Lt. Turner.—Mr. Magrath's Publication.—Overtures to Messrs. Macdonald, Brownell, and Champlin.—Overtures to British Officers.—Reasons assigned by Captain Elliott for their Hostility. — Story of throwing overboard Motto flag.—Duels.—Difficulties among Crews.—Barclay's Feelings towards Perry.*

ON the seventh of October Perry returned to Detroit, to which place the army soon after followed, all armed resistance having ceased. General Harrison and Captain Perry now issued a joint proclamation, dated at Sandwich, to the in-

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habitants of the upper district of Upper Canada, informing them that the land and naval forces of the British having been captured or destroyed, and the district being now in quiet possession of our troops, it became necessary to provide for its civil government. The inhabitants were therefore guaranteed protection in their persons and property, and all their previous rights and privileges were secured to them. The laws and customs of the country, as they existed previous to its conquest, were declared to be in force, and the magistrates and civil officers were directed to resume their functions, having previously taken an oath of fidelity to the government of the United States as long as the district should remain in our possession.

There being no longer any armed enemy on our northwestern frontier or in the neighbourhood of the upper lakes, it became obvious that the greater portion of the militia would be disbanded, and the remainder of the army transported to Buffalo, to be in a situation to act on the Niagara frontier. The business of completely vanquishing the enemy had been so quickly despatched, that some delay at Detroit was necessary in order to learn the pleasure of the government as to the disposition to be made of the fleet and army. The leisure was employed in completing the pacification of the Indian tribes, who had already been admitted by General M'Arthur to terms of peace,

and had given hostages for their good behaviour. The fate of their great chief Tecumseh, at the Thames, had effectually broken the league, of which he had been the master-spirit.

During this detention at Detroit, Perry enjoyed the first-fruits of that glory which his splendid victory had won for him. It was there that newspapers, pouring in from every side, made him first aware of the vast importance that was attached to what he had achieved, in its effects at once on the interests as well as the glory of the nation. He was everywhere hailed as the deliverer of the frontier from savage warfare, as the first American victor in a general naval action with a powerful foe, for centuries accustomed only to conquer; and the peculiar circumstances of personal gallantry which attended his own conduct in retrieving the day, when, to all appearances, so nearly lost, and which rendered the victory so eminently his own, had fastened itself upon the popular imagination, and created a fervour of enthusiasm in his behalf, which sped with electric rapidity over the whole country, uniting all parties, whether opposed to or in favour of the war, in one fervent glow of admiration. Salutes and illuminations everywhere greeted the arrival of the intelligence, and the general joy is said to have been unequalled since the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

The congratulations of Perry's own family were

not among the least acceptable that he received. One incident sensibly touched his feelings. The news of his victory had found his grandfather, Freeman Perry, at the mature age of eighty-three, on his deathbed. The first brief announcement of the victory, in the moment of its being won, was read to him. On the verge of the grave, he could yet exult in the achievement of his descendant, by which so much was done for the cause of humanity as well as of his own country. But the pious reliance on a superior power, instead of on his own might, evinced in the few lines of his grandson's despatch, gratified him even to tears. He caused it to be read over to him several times; and the words "it has pleased the Almighty" lingered on his lips, and blended with his latest prayers for the prosperity of his children.

The secretary of the navy, whose censorious letter of the eighteenth of August was still fresh in Perry's memory, was not the last to give way to the prevailing sentiment, or to acknowledge the brilliancy of a victory which had lustre to spare to reflect a little on himself. The following letter, coming, as it does, in the collection of Perry's letters from the navy department next to that of the eighteenth of August, is absolutely amusing in its contrast. Its somewhat turgid style, too, compares disadvantageously with the solemn yet modest terms in which Perry had addressed him.

“Navy Department, September 21, 1813.

“SIR,

“Rumour had preceded and prepared the public mind for the enthusiastic reception of the glorious tidings confirmed by your letter of the tenth, received and published in handbills this day.

“Every demonstration of joy and admiration that a victory so transcendantly brilliant, decisive, and important in its consequences could excite, was exhibited as far and as fast as the roar of cannon and the splendour of illumination could travel.

“In the absence of the president, I have no hesitation in anticipating his warmest admiration and thanks, in behalf of our country, for this splendid achievement, which must ever continue among the brightest honours of the nation. You will please accept for yourself an ample share, and communicate to the gallant officers, seamen, and others under your command, the full measure of those sentiments and feelings which it is my duty to express and my delight to cherish.

“To-morrow, I trust, will bring the interesting details, for which so many hearts are palpitating, between the laurel and the cypress.

“I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“W. JONES.

“Oliver H. Perry, Esq.,

“Commanding the U. S. naval forces on Lake Erie.” }

Accompanying this letter from the secretary, another, dated on the subsequent day, was at the same time received from him, approving of Perry's disposition of the prizes, and expressing the hope that the commissary-general of prisoners would approve his promise to admit Commodore Barclay to parole, and his desire to extend to the wounded prisoners generally every office of humanity consistent with their safe keeping. He at the same time received from the commissary-general of prisoners the requested authority to parole Barclay, for which he expressed his gratitude in terms which show how strong an interest he took in befriending his gallant prisoner. Soon after, Perry received a third letter from the secretary, communicating the president's approbation of his heroic conduct in the action of the tenth of September, the better to express which, the president had directed a commission to be made out, promoting him to the rank of post-captain; and, to render the compliment more appropriate, he was made to take rank from the day of his victory. Perry was within one of being at the head of the list of masters-commandant, and the reward, in his case, was insignificant when compared with that which had been bestowed on Lieutenant C. Morris for services which, from his subordinate situation, were necessarily inferior to those which Perry had been able to render. Yet, having nobly acqui

ceeded in the advancement of Lieutenant Morris over his head, and, in fact, over the whole grade of masters-commandant, he scrupled, in his own case, to receive promotion over a single officer, and expressed to the secretary, in reply, his wish that, if there should be any doubts as to the propriety of his promotion, his commission might be kept back until he should be entitled to it by seniority, without passing over Captain Leonard, the only officer of his grade above him.

The letter which announced Perry's promotion also granted him the leave which he had requested to return to his family, provided he was of opinion that the service would not suffer by his absence. In that event, he was directed to resume the command of the Newport station until a suitable ship should be provided for him. No service of importance remaining for him to perform on the upper lakes, in consequence of the total overthrow of British power in that quarter, he prepared to avail himself of the leave thus given to him, and to gratify his longing desire to be reunited to his family. General Harrison had received orders to repair with a part of his army to Fort George. Two thousand of the troops were therefore embarked on board the squadron, and General Harrison, with part of his staff, took passage with Perry in the *Ariel*. Touching at Put-in-Bay, Perry had the lively gratification of announ-

cing to Commodore Barclay that he was empowered to parole him, and of receiving him, with his surgeon, on board of the *Ariel*, in order to transport him as far as Buffalo on his way homeward. The remainder of the British prisoners remained on board the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, in Put-in Bay, a few days longer. They were then embarked for Erie, where they were carefully attended until completely cured; after which they were removed to Pittsburg, in Pennsylvania, for their greater security from desertion.

On the twenty-second of October the *Ariel* arrived alone at Erie, the rest of the squadron not getting in until the close of the day. Perry immediately landed, accompanied by General Harrison; and he, with the general's adjutant-general, Colonel Gaines, assisted in sustaining Commodore Barclay up the steep hill to the hotel where they were to lodge. The citizens, recognising the *Ariel* in the offing, had speedily prepared to receive Perry with the enthusiasm which his victory awakened among them. They had witnessed his anxious and apparently hopeless efforts to create the squadron, obstructed by every conceivable difficulty, and in perpetual peril of its being destroyed by the enemy while yet incomplete. His steady perseverance and resources, equal to every emergency as it occurred, had at length enabled him to launch forth upon the lake, and win a victory over the



superior force which had been so long in possession of it. And now he was returned among them, after having triumphed eminently by his own unparalleled exertions and heroism, afloat, and having prepared and assisted in the triumph which had ensued upon land. They, more than others of their fellow-citizens, were aware of the magnitude of Perry's services and the difficulties by which he was surrounded. They received him again among them with a salute of guns, and the whole population of the village, meeting him at the beach with exulting and enthusiastic acclamations, accompanied him in triumphant procession.

Perry had expected that the unattended manner in which he had arrived in the little *Ariel* would have allowed him to reach his lodgings unperceived with his wounded friend, to whom quiet was so necessary, and to whom a turmoil of this nature must have been particularly painful, by reminding him of the triumph which he had hoped would have been his own. The generous nature of Perry would have shrunk from exposing Barclay to so painful a position had it been anticipated. It only remained for him to provide in the best manner that he was able for his comfort during their short stay in Erie.

In the course of the afternoon the *Niagara* arrived in the offing, whence Captain Elliott reported himself by letter. He stated that he was so

much indisposed that he deemed it necessary to go on shore to sick-quarters, and, in a friendly note at the bottom of his official letter, requested Perry to procure a room for him. It may thus be perceived that he still ostensibly preserved a friendly bearing towards Perry, though habitually assailing him in his conversations with others. That evening the whole village of Erie was in a blaze of illumination, and the inhabitants paraded the streets with transparencies descriptive of the battles by sea and land, and laudatory of the chiefs by whom they had been gained. The names of Perry and Harrison were everywhere emblazoned with the Tenth of September and the Fifth of October, the dates on which they had been gained, and the memorable words, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." The name of Captain Elliott figured on no transparency, nor was he in any way noticed by the citizens collected to do honour to the two chiefs. Finding himself wholly neglected by this assemblage, and that his sayings formed no watchwords, his name called forth no exulting cheers, and observing in the newspapers that the credit of the victory, which had awakened such enthusiasm throughout the country, was ascribed wholly to Perry, he became a prey to discontent and rancorous feelings towards the individual by whose deeds, even more than his superior station, he had been thrown into such obscurity.

Captain Elliott now addressed to General Harrison the complaints and the self-eulogy that he had heretofore confined to humbler listeners. He stated that Commodore Perry had done him injustice in his official despatch, by leading the public to believe that, during several hours of the fight, he had not been in close action, whereas he asserted to General Harrison he had been so during the whole time, and that his officers were ready to prove it; that Commodore Perry had promised, after showing him a rough draught of his report, to alter the part to which he objected; but, having failed to do so, the public were misled; and that, instead of obtaining credit for one half of the victory, which he claimed as his due, he had been calumniated by unfavourable rumours, which Commodore Perry had done nothing to counteract.

An ancient friendship which had existed between the father of Captain Elliott and General Harrison, and which had doubtless influenced Captain Elliott's application, induced General Harrison, at Captain Elliott's request, to state to Commodore Perry the substance of his complaint with regard to the position assigned to his ship in the official report of the battle. Under the friendly auspices of General Harrison, an interview took place on the following morning between Commodore Perry and Captain Elliott, in which the former, while insisting upon the conformity of his report, which

he had only conditionally promised to alter, with his own distinct impressions, generously consented to an arbitration between two officers, one of which was to be chosen by Captain Elliott. If they should decide that the report did injustice to Captain Elliott, Perry promised to write a letter to the secretary of the navy correcting whatever they should consider erroneous; and this letter was to be published for the exculpation of Captain Elliott. Lieutenant D. Turner, who commanded the *Caledonia* during the action, and Lieutenant J. J. Edwards, of the *Niagara*, who had been her second lieutenant during the action, and, by the illness and departure of Lieutenant Smith, had since become first, were the officers respectively chosen. These, having taken into consideration that part of the official report relating to the period at which the *Niagara* came into close action, namely, at half past two, of which Captain Elliott complained, were unanimously of opinion, which they expressed before General Harrison, who was present throughout, that the report was correct. Perry, in consequence, announced to Captain Elliott by letter, from Buffalo, that he must decline making any alteration in his official report.\*

\* After such objections to the official report, and such efforts to procure it to be made more favourable to him, it is singular to find Captain Elliott, before the court of inquiry into his conduct in 1815, when the British official account and the sen-

Before we accompany Perry in his triumphal progress towards his native state, we will anticipate events, in order to review the subsequent efforts of Captain Elliott, when left in command on Lake Erie, to undermine the reputation of his late commander, and repair and magnify his own. Shortly after the tenth of September, while the army was encamped on Bass Island, and the officers were, of course, always happy to exchange the extreme discomforts of their tents for a lodging on shipboard, Major Chambers went on board the Niagara, by invitation from Captain Elliott, to pass the night. Very soon after entering the cabin, his host began relating the events of the battle in such a way as to show that he considered himself unjustly treated by the commodore, and entitled to more tence of the court-martial on Commodore Barclay had made him appear so much more disadvantageously, strenuously endeavouring to substantiate this very report, and making a question as to its accuracy a leading one to almost every witness. Still more remarkable is it to find him, when called upon by Lieutenant Holdup Stevens to furnish the grounds upon which he, Captain Elliott, had made to Commodore Perry assertions derogatory to Mr. Stevens's character, which alone Commodore Perry had informed Mr. Stevens had led to his not being mentioned in the official report, virtually disclaiming all cognizance of the making out of that report, and expressing astonishment at Perry's idea of "information said to have been received from his second in command, who, from the particular nature of the official despatch, had not, and could not have, any agency in making out the report of that action, or in communicating anything that led to it."

credit than he was likely to receive. At this time, nothing, of course, could have been generally known of the official report of Perry, or of his entertaining any unfavourable opinion of his second in command. Major Chambers, though he considered this overflowing of egotism and vanity as harmless in itself, from a belief that it would never be carried farther than in boasting and complaining among those who were considered to be friends, was yet so much dissatisfied with the conduct of Captain Elliott as to request to be sent immediately on shore.

At the same or at an earlier period, Captain Elliott had commenced, among his own officers on board the Niagara, the discussion of the relative efforts which their vessel and the Lawrence had exerted towards the accomplishment of the victory. They had shared in the discredit attached to their vessel during the first two hours and a half of the action ; and though Perry had rendered them partakers in the brilliant part the Niagara had acted while under his command, yet the stigma unanimously cast upon their vessel by the other officers of the squadron, and the artful efforts of Captain Elliott to identify his officers with himself, by representing, in the cases of Purser Magrath and Sailing-master Webster, that neither of them would have been mentioned in Captain Perry's official report but for him, and other similar

acts of ingratiating and efforts to create ill-feeling against Perry, caused them to attempt to defend the course of their vessel throughout the whole action, in defiance of overwhelming facts, and even to recriminate on the *Lawrence*, giving currency to the suggestion thrown out to them, that the *Lawrence*, having surrendered, was not entitled to prize-money, but that, on the contrary, the rest of the squadron were entitled to prize-money for her.

Captain Elliott's first efforts among his officers resulted in the following commendatory letter to himself, signed by the wardroom officers, and dated on the nineteenth of September.

“We, the officers of the U. S. brig *Niagara*, under your command, with the most profound respect, congratulate you on our late victory over the British squadron; well convinced that in you we were ably commanded, and that your valour, intrepidity, and skill could not be surpassed. You have, sir, our most ardent wish for future prosperity and happiness, both in your official and private capacity; and may your future naval course ever be as brilliant as the present.”

Having, however, not yet been moulded into that frame of mind which could induce them to say or do aught that was disrespectful or dispa-

ging to Captain Perry, the same officers addressed, on the same day, a corresponding letter to him, similar in all respects to the above, except that the expressions "our late victory" was changed to "your late victory."

Subsequent efforts among his officers, and minds prepared by continued recrimination to go a step farther in defence of their own vessel, led to the production, on the thirteenth of October, of a letter from five of the officers of the Niagara, giving an account of the battle, in which it is stated that the Niagara's not engaging the Queen Charlotte, her designated antagonist, was owing to the latter having bore away from the fire of the Niagara, and joined the Detroit in her attack on the Lawrence. Whereas, in the British account of the battle, the closing up of the Queen Charlotte was stated to be in consequence of the Niagara having "kept so far to windward as to render the Queen Charlotte's twenty-pounder carronades useless." In the same official report, Commodore Barclay makes the fate of the day to turn upon Captain Perry's removing from the Lawrence to the Niagara, "which vessel was at this time perfectly fresh," and bearing up to take a raking position under the bows of the Detroit and Queen Charlotte. In the finding of the British court-martial, too, on Commodore Barclay and his officers and men for the loss of the squadron on Lake



Erie, the main cause of their defeat was also stated to be the same manœuvre—Captain Perry's hoisting "his flag on another of his squadron, which had not been engaged, and was making away." None of this evidence, nor of the concurrent testimony of Captain Perry's official report, backed by that of all the commanders and most respectable officers on Lake Erie, was in any way invalidated or contradicted by this letter of the officers of the Niagara. They did not even pretend that the Niagara had been in close action previous to Captain Perry's leaving the Lawrence. They, however, stated some new and strange circumstances; such as that, when Captain Perry came on board the Niagara, "he observed to Captain Elliott that he apprehended the action was lost, who, with the spirit and promptitude we have been accustomed to see him exert, replied, 'No, sir, I will yet try and save the day.' He accordingly repaired on board, and, taking the direction of one of the small vessels, brought the whole of them into action at close musket shot; the consequence was, that in ten minutes the Detroit and Queen Charlotte, with the Lady Prevost, struck to us, and, soon after, the whole of the enemy's squadron followed their example. The Lawrence had some minutes before this struck her colours and hauled out of the line. You will perceive, sir, by this account, that the Niagara was

most usefully and energetically engaged during the action; and the gallant manner and the celerity with which the small vessels were brought into action, and the instant change effected by it, ranks Captain Elliott, in our opinion, as second to none in the late action.\* The rest of the letter was filled with generalities and profuse praise of their "noble commander." The document, though artfully constructed so as to throw the delinquency of the Niagara out of view, bears internal evidence of being made to order; and is rendered of little value, since circumstances have shown the extraordinary dexterity of this officer in procuring favourable testimonials from those under his command.†

It will be observed that these five officers join in giving the words uttered respectively by Captain Perry and Captain Elliott when the former came on board the Niagara. Though the Niagara was not in close action, her crew was at quarters, and her officers must most of them have

\* It had been expected that this letter would be published by the secretary. This expectation having been disappointed, the letter, with scarcely any variation of language, was turned into a friendly one from Lieutenant J. E. Smith, of the Niagara, to a person in Baltimore, and published in that city. The reader will see in the sequel how Captain Elliott had spoken of this gentleman.

† See the finding of the court-martial on Commodore J. D. Elliott, held in Philadelphia in 1840.

been at a distance from the gangway when Captain Perry came on board, as, indeed, Captain Brevoort states to have been actually the fact. The enemy were on the starboard side; the starboard guns were necessarily manned, and it is not likely that a single officer was present at the larboard gangway, by which Captain Perry came on board, except only Captain Elliott, who came there to receive him. From Captain Elliott, then, probably proceeded the statement of this extraordinary conversation; the real nature of it, which is so different, we have seen in the text as related by Captain Perry to Mr. Hambleton immediately after his return to the *Lawrence*, and set down by him at a time when no one supposed it would be the subject of such absurd misrepresentation. With regard to the pretension put forward by these officers that the day was decided by Captain Elliott's bringing up the small vessels, and their opinion that he was "second to none in the attainment of the late action," it may be sufficient to state, that, at the moment Captain Elliott left the *Niagara* to bring up the small vessels, then out of the action astern, Captain Perry bore down towards the enemy in the *Niagara*. He passed through the enemy's line, raking them from both batteries within pistol-shot, and, in fifteen minutes from his bearing up, the enemy's principal ships had struck. Both Captain Perry and Captain El-

liott started upon their different errands towards the enemy and from the enemy at the same moment. The fifteen minutes employed by Captain Perry in bearing down and compelling the enemy to strike, left little leisure for Captain Elliott to speak each of the gunboats in turn, order them to hasten up into action, and then return to the Somers, which was second in the line, the Trippe having passed her, and take part in the battle. The part which was by that time left to him to perform must have been very inconsiderable. The fifteen minutes must have been exhausted, and the battle over. Again, Captain Elliott is made to reply to Captain Perry's alleged remark that he apprehended the action was lost, "No, sir, I will yet try and save the day." Another of Captain Elliott's friends, giving an account for publication with a view of reacting in favour of Captain Elliott, and doubtless setting down whatever he was asked to, describes the conversation as continuing as follows: "I wish to God you would!" "Take charge of my battery while I bring the gunboats in close action, and the day will yet be ours."\* After the action was over,

\* Captain Elliott, in a more recent version of this conversation in his Biography, adds the remark, "My ship is now in a judicious position." Captain Elliott's pretension of having placed his "ship in a judicious position," even had he ever before uttered the remark, from which Mr. Cooper gets his idea of Captain El

this same witness, Captain Brevoort, is made to state, equally, as it would seem, on the single authority of Captain Elliott, that, when Captain El-

liott having given the squadron "a very commanding position," have neither of them the least foundation in naval tactics or in common sense. The most "judicious position" which the Niagara could have had, either for breaking the line or taking her due share in the battle, was the position assigned to her alongside the Queen Charlotte, and at close quarters; a position which, be it understood, as involving the whole substance of the question, she never occupied. From that position she could have broken the line astern of the Queen Charlotte and Detroit, and, raking them through their sterns far more destructively than through their bows, have luffed up on the same tack, instead of finding herself, as she did, from the position in which she broke through ahead on the contrary tack, less conveniently situated for engaging. Again, the "judicious position" of Captain Elliott, and the "very commanding position" of Mr. Cooper, what were they? The Niagara, when boarded by Perry, had got opposite the head of the British line. When Perry bore down to break that line, the British squadron attempted to wear, and the two principal ships getting foul alone prevented them from completing the evolution. Had it been completed, and the chances were ten to one that it would be, the Niagara would have been at the rear instead of at the head of the British line, and Captain Elliott's "judicious position" and Mr. Cooper's "very commanding position" would have been reversed. In this case, the tactics of these gentlemen, to be consistent, would have led them to run to the other extremity of the line, now become the head, in order to recover their judicious and commanding position. Such is the absurdity in which these two gentlemen are involved. Captain Elliott by endeavouring to extricate himself from the hopeless perplexities of his position, Mr. Cooper without probably being aware of it, and betrayed by his partiality.

liott returned to the Niagara, " Captain Perry ran and caught hold of his hand, saying, ' I owe all this to your exertions ; it has given us the day. ' " Admitting the above to be true, when it is neither probable nor consistent with facts, it would prove that Captain Elliott volunteered to bring up the small vessels, a service of less peril even than that in which he was then engaged, and that he was allowed to depart on that humble errand ; a work of pure supererogation, as it is presumable that the officers commanding those vessels were using every exertion in their power to get into action, though Captain Elliott reported to Captain Perry that they were not, and caused him to omit all notice of them in his official report, which he subsequently regretted. He states that he caused them to cease firing and get out their sweeps. As the breeze had by this time considerably freshened, this expedient, which might have been advantageously adopted earlier in the action, could have been of little use.

His telling Captain Perry to take charge of his battery was at least superfluous, when that was the sole object which brought Perry to the Niagara. But his taking charge of her battery in the situation in which Captain Elliott had left her would have been attended by no consequences. What Captain Perry did was first to heave the Niagara to in order to stop her from running rap-

idly out of the action. The next evolution was to brail up the main trysail and bear up dead before the wind, steering a whole right angle off from the course Captain Elliott had steered, running directly for the enemy instead of running rapidly past him. Upon this decisive evolution the fate of the battle had so rapidly turned, that, in fifteen minutes from the time the Niagara bore up, the enemy surrendered. This evolution, recognised by every American witness except the interested ones of Captain Elliott, and every British witness without exception, to have been the critical one upon which the fate of the battle turned, was what Barclay called making "a noble, and, alas! too successful an effort to regain" the day. Yet Captain Elliott makes no claim to having suggested this manœuvre. He merely lays claim, and his officers in his behalf and on his authority, to having requested Captain Perry to take charge of his battery, when it was for that sole purpose that he had directed his boat towards the Niagara, saying, before he left the Lawrence, to Lieutenant Forrest, who remarked to him, "That brig will not help us; see how he keeps off; he will not come to close action," "I'll fetch him up!"

Having thus secured the endorsement of those whom he had led to believe that their reputations were involved with his in the credit to be assigned

to the Niagara, Captain Elliott's next step in the plan of restoring his reputation by means of letters and certificates was in an application to Lieutenant D. Turner. This officer was the third in rank during the action, and having greatly distinguished himself in it, and being, moreover, a gentleman of the highest standing for probity and honour, his favourable testimony, if obtained, would go far to restore the reputation of Captain Elliott. Lieutenant, now Captain Turner, thus describes, under oath, the manner in which he was approached. "Some time after Captain Perry left the lake, and when the squadron was under Captain Elliott's command, he applied to me, and repeatedly urged me to give him a certificate respecting his conduct in the battle. He said that his only reason for wishing one was to have it in his power to calm his wife's uneasiness, who had heard that his conduct had been questioned; and declared to me, upon his honour, that he would make no other use of it than as a means of relieving her unhappiness. Thus delicately and unpleasantly situated, I wrote such a certificate as I thought I might, for such an occasion, venture to give Captain Elliott."

Mr. Turner having agreed to furnish Captain Elliott with a certificate, to be used, under the pledge of his honour, only for the specific purpose of calming his wife's uneasiness, a letter was, by agreement, addressed by Captain Elliott to Lieu-



tenant Turner, as in the case of the similar certificate furnished by Captain Perry for the same purpose. This letter was dated on the twenty-sixth of October, and was in the following words: "Some malicious persons have been circulating reports prejudicial to the character of the Niagara when engaged with the enemy's fleet on the tenth September last. I will thank you to say with candour if on that day she was not in her situation as arranged previous to the action, and if, during the action, every possible assistance was not rendered by her and myself individually."

The task which Mr. Turner had undertaken to perform, under the influence of an appeal not easily resisted, was still an unpleasant one. Captain Elliott had written and delivered his letter in the presence of Mr. Turner, and pressed for an answer; but it was only after renewed solicitation, and promises that his certificate would not be published, that he at length consented to furnish the following: "In answer to your note of yesterday, I have no hesitation in saying that the Niagara was in the station assigned her previous to the engagement of the tenth; and it is my opinion that you, sir, and every officer on board of the Niagara, made use of every exertion, from the different situations in which your vessel was." This ambiguous letter, if it were suited to calm the uneasiness of a wife, for which it was intended, was cer-

tainly of little value for the purpose of publication, for which it was solemnly pledged not to be used. Yet Captain Elliott subsequently published this letter in the biographical notice of himself, which could only have been written from materials and opinions furnished by him and under his inspection, and which, though it may have been revised and remodelled by some professional writer, sufficiently to relieve Captain Elliott from the responsibility of authorship, and the bad taste of overwhelming himself with fulsome and unmeasured praise, still belongs essentially to the class of autobiography. He not only publishes this letter in his book, but attempts elaborately to disprove and ridicule the idea of the certificate having been furnished by Lieutenant Turner "to calm his wife's uneasiness." In order to show that this high-minded officer, under the responsibility of an oath, had stated nothing lightly, and had not been misled by his memory after a lapse of nearly five years from the occurrence of his interview with Captain Elliott, we will here extract a passage from an original letter from Lieutenant Turner to Captain Perry, dated only two days later than his certificate, and stating the extreme reluctance with which he had given it. "I apologized for not answering his note until I could no longer avoid answering it; he assured me it would not be published, and that his wish for my note was

to forward it to Mrs. Elliott, with one he received from you, sir, a few days after the action, wherein you approve of his conduct." This passage, written at a time when any public discussion of this matter was unexpected, is interesting, not merely as showing the entreaty by which the certificate was wrung from Mr. Turner, but also as containing evidence corroborative of Captain Perry's statement with regard to the circumstances under which his own certificate had been furnished, and the limited use which he expected would be made of it.

Only two days after Captain Elliott had thus told Mr. Turner that he wished his certificate to forward to Mrs. Elliott with the one which he had received from Captain Perry, the latter was published in the *Erie Sentinel*, under the auspices of Mr. Magrath, to whom it had necessarily been communicated by Captain Elliott. A commentary of some length from Mr. Magrath on the battle of the tenth of September, and Captain Elliott's part in it, accompanied the publication of the correspondence. Captain Elliott had excited in the mind of Mr. Magrath a feeling of ill-will towards Perry and of gratitude towards himself, by representing to him that Perry had originally omitted to mention him with commendation in his official report,\* and had only subse-

\* It will be seen in the sequel that this was not the case.

quently mentioned his services in going in a boat during the action, at the instance and suggestion of Captain Elliott. Hence the motive of this gentleman in interfering. Still, with his mind imbittered towards Captain Perry, he does not, in this publication, utter a single derogatory expression, or state a disparaging fact. On the contrary, he fully corroborates all the various statements as to the remoteness of the Niagara during different periods of the action, when he says of Captain Elliott, "He remarked to me repeatedly in the action that we were not as close alongside the enemy as he wished; that we left their long guns too much superiority, and that he was certain, if close alongside the Queen Charlotte, ten minutes would determine the contest in our favour." As, however, he describes the Niagara, with her "main yard braced sharp aback," "frequently," it is very obvious why she could not get "close alongside the Queen Charlotte."

It would seem, from Captain Elliott's Biography, that Mr. Magrath had exercised an important part in the management of the Niagara during the action, and that Captain Elliott had yielded his own opinion to his, with regard to bearing down, in company with the Caledonia, to relieve the Lawrence from the fire of the British squadron. The Biography thus speaks of Captain Elliot: "He once thought of passing to leeward and

breaking the British line ; but, on consulting with Mr. Magrath, an officer of great coolness and judgment, he came to the just conclusion that such a movement would be destructive." It would seem, then, that, at an important conjuncture during the battle, Magrath determined the manœuvre of Captain Elliott's vessel.

Captain Perry had sent his reply from Buffalo declining to make any alteration in his official report. During the interval between the departure of Perry and the receipt of his expected letter at Erie, Captain Elliott had given out that, if Perry did not write what he expected from him, he would make his own statements, and support them with his life. Throughout the autumn he continued, with unceasing activity, his efforts to obtain certificates, using the influence which his station gave him over his officers to extort them. Several masters' mates in the squadron had been advanced after the action to be acting sailing-masters, and appointed to commands. It was rumoured that these appointments would now be revoked ; and this conjuncture was taken advantage of by Captain Elliott to call upon these officers for certificates. Mr. Macdonald was one of these officers. He was exceedingly reluctant to express any opinion on the subject, and yet was afraid that his failing to express a favourable one would lose him his situation. As no certificate from him ap-

pears in Captain Elliott's book, it is probable he gave none. He complained bitterly, at the time, of its being ungenerous in Captain Elliott to apply for such a purpose to an officer so much below him in rank. When Mr. Brownell, who was similarly situated, was applied to for a certificate by Captain Elliott in person, he stopped him at once by begging to be excused from even conversing on the subject, saying that he was sure they could not agree, and he feared he might say something to hurt Captain Elliott's feelings.

The wrecked condition of the Detroit and the Queen Charlotte rendered it difficult to remove them from Put-in Bay to a place of greater security from an attack from the enemy after the lake should become icebound. It was therefore necessary to send a force of officers and men to guard these vessels. This service was looked to with great dread by the officers, on account of the isolation and discomfort of the station; and Put-in Bay became better known among the officers at Erie as Botany Bay. Daily rumours were afloat as to who were to be ordered on that service, always, however, varying among those who were known to be most independent in their opinions, and least willing to furnish the existing commander with a certificate of good conduct; among the names oftenest mentioned were those of Lieutenants Turner and Holdup Stevens. At length,

Captain Elliott had occasion to go to Buffalo. While at Buffalo he applied to Sailing-master Champlin, who then commanded the Tigress schooner, for a certificate as to the position of the Niagara during the battle. Mr. Champlin declined giving one, stating that his vessel, the Scorpion, being well ahead and actively engaged, and the Lawrence between them, enveloped, like his own vessel, in smoke, he could not see the Niagara. This answer displeased Captain Elliott.\* He ordered Mr. Champlin to go immediately on board his vessel and remain there. He subsequently ordered him to proceed to Erie, on the twelfth of December, in a snowstorm which was then raging. Captain Elliott followed him up by land, and, arriving on the fourteenth, despatched him immediately to Put-in Bay. The passage was a frightful one on that boisterous lake in the middle of December. Storms, of violence not inferior to those on the ocean, often blow there; scarcely any good harbours exist, and, of course, there is

\* Captain Elliott thought it unreasonable in Mr. Champlin to decline giving a certificate to him about the position of the Niagara, because he was at the head of the line, and had three vessels between him and the Niagara. Mr. Brownell, who was in the Ariel, one vessel nearer, testified unfavourably to Captain Elliott's conduct. At page 62 of Captain Elliott's Biography is an attempt to invalidate Mr. Brownell's evidence on account of his position, when Mr. Champlin, being farther off, was punished for not testifying.

no searoom. On this account vessels are so frequently driven on shore there ; and, in fact, five of the small vessels of the squadron were high and dry on some part of the lake-coast at that very time. Wrecks of this description are not unfrequently attended with loss of life, as had been the case with one of our schooners. After a frightful passage, and being frozen up four days in the middle of the lake, Mr. Champlin at length arrived at Put-in Bay.

Captain Elliott did not even abstain from endeavouring to procure testimony in his favour from the wounded British officers at Erie, who, as prisoners, should have been treated with delicacy. At a ball given by the citizens, these gentlemen were present by invitation. In the course of the evening, he questioned them with regard to the position of his ship during the action. They avoided giving him any answer, and subsequently expressed indignation at being thus addressed. Lieutenant Bignal, late commander of the Hunter, said that, if he had been urged farther, he would have stated some facts that would not have been relished ; and that, had Captain Elliott belonged to the British navy, he would have been hanged ; while others said that, if Captain Elliott wished a certificate from the British officers, they would give him one that the Niagara was not in a position that they could fire at her until Perry went on board of her.



Finding that he could obtain no favourable testimony from the British officers, he consoled himself by the reflection that they were prejudiced against him; they were partial towards Captain Perry, because they had beaten him and taken his ship; and they hated Captain Elliott because he had changed the day, and beaten them in turn; and this reasoning is gravely reproduced in the Autobiography of Captain Elliott in the following words: "Considering, then, the general deportment of the British government towards enemies, and the general character of British accounts, the reader will be able to explain the imputed feelings of the British officers on Lake Erie towards Captains Perry and Elliott. They had beaten the first, and captured his ship; and, at the very moment when Captain Elliott was bearing down in the Niagara upon the head of the British line, the crew of the Detroit, after giving three cheers, were lowering their boats to take possession of her. Of course, the British officers entertained no asperities against Commodore Perry. He had fought them most bravely; but, in spite of his efforts, they had taken from him a fine ship, and felt towards him, as they feel towards all from whom they have taken a rich booty, very benevolent. But Captain Elliott had snatched the victory from their hands when they were most sure of it. Instead of being victors over a whole

fleet, and rejoicing in the fancied invincibility of British seamen, they were prisoners of war ! The royal ensign, the cross of St. George, had been hauled down from over their heads, and the stain of defeat was upon it ! The world had now witnessed the defeat and capture—not of a British ship, but of—a—British fleet ! Yes ! the only instance of the kind on record ! a British fleet, after a desperate battle, had been captured in a fair fight by a force not superior, if equal !! And who had brought this reproach upon the flag of their country ? Who had cut so deep into the glories of the fast-anchored isle ? Captain Elliott ! In the bitterness of their disappointment, they could not refrain from angry feelings or angry expressions. They hated him for the deed ; and, as men seldom praise those whom they hate, the British officers could not refrain from venting their feelings in attempting to depreciate Captain Elliott.”

Such is a specimen of a work, put forth, as if in consciousness of its being an outrage on public decency, without the name of either author, publisher, or even printer ; a work which may be pronounced without a parallel. How painful, then, to discover, in several particulars, a coincidence of views between this disowned foundling and Mr. Cooper’s *Naval History* ? a coincidence most apparent in the effort to destroy, as a vulgar illusion of the

unenlightened mass, the universal feeling of admiration which Perry's passing from the Lawrence to the Niagara, in the height of the engagement, to bring the latter into close action, has ever called forth. He has attempted to show that, if there was any merit in this act, Captain Elliott exhibited it in a greater degree. "Captain Elliott was much longer in the same boat, and passed nearly through the whole line twice." And, again, he endeavours to equalize the degree of danger to which these officers voluntarily exposed themselves, by adding, "There was, no doubt, a personal risk in all the boats, but there was personal risk everywhere on such an occasion." With regard to this pretension of equality of exposure between the two officers, it may be sufficient to state, that of the total killed and wounded of the squadron, amounting, in all, to twenty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded, twenty-four were killed and eighty-six wounded at the side of Captain Perry, while, at the utmost, but four were wounded at the side of Captain Elliott. If, therefore, "there was personal risk everywhere," even Mr. Cooper will hardly deny that it differed essentially in degree.\*

\* Acting Sailing-master Webster, of the Niagara, testified, before a court of inquiry on Captain Elliott in 1815, that two men were killed from his division, and a number of men wounded on board before he went below. This took place before

Having at length procured all the certificates that he could, Captain Elliott announced that he had documents sufficient for his purpose. Copies of these were forwarded in various directions, or exhibited extensively by himself, with numerous oral commentaries. In his verbal descriptions then, as in his long-subsequently printed book, the battle of Lake Erie was made to assume a very new appearance. Captain Perry was made to come over the side of the Niagara in despair, exclaiming in bitterness, "The damned gunboats have ruined me, and I fear they have lost me

Captain Perry boarded the Niagara, at which time Mr. Webster was below, though he signed the letter stating what Captain Perry said at that time to Captain Elliott. Mr. Webster was unquestionably mistaken. Though he was himself carried below stunned by a hammock, wad, or falling rigging, though thoroughly stunned for the time, he recovered and returned to his duty; he was not even sufficiently injured to be borne on the list of the slightly wounded. There were but two killed in all on board the Niagara during the action; and the surgeon who made out the list of killed and wounded, and attended to curing the latter, ascertained personally from them that only two had been wounded before Captain Perry took charge of the brig. As there were twenty-three out of twenty-five who were wounded after he came on board, while engaging the whole British squadron within pistol-shot, the conclusion seems irresistible, that the only two killed throughout the action must have been killed after she came to close quarters. The two known to be wounded at that time may have been supposed by Mr. Webster dead, and been the two concerning which he testified.

the day!" Perry is inclined to surrender, but Captain Elliott will not listen to this. He exclaims, "No, sir! it is not lost! My ship is now in a judicious position! Take charge of my battery, and I will bring them up and save it!" and then the action is made to turn upon the bringing up of the small vessels, and not at all on the bearing up and terrible cannonade of the Niagara. The victory won, Perry is made to take hold of Captain Elliott by both hands, and tell him that he owed this to him; that he had immortalized himself; and, if he had any influence, he should be posted. In connexion with this story, and by way of fortifying it, to show that Captain Perry left the Lawrence in despair, it was asserted that he had thrown his motto-flag, having on it "Don't give up the ship," overboard on his way to the Niagara, and that it was subsequently picked up by Mr. Magrath and taken on board the latter vessel. This assertion was wholly untrue. The flag was left flying on board the Lawrence by Captain Perry, and hauled down with her other colours after he had reached the Niagara. The story was contradicted at the time by Mr. Magrath, who stated he unbent the flag and took it on board the Niagara, which vessel had become Perry's flagship. Yet this absurd story of the flag having been found afloat in the lake, where Captain Perry had thrown it in de-

spair, though no less physically impossible than Mr. Magrath had declared it to be untrue, is gravely reproduced in the Autobiography, where also may be found most of the assertions dealt forth by him at Erie and Buffalo.\*

The kitchen of the village inn of the former place was one of his favourite places of declamation. There, as elsewhere, he would show his documents, boast of his standing with the president, relate the story of his former and his more recent services, and state his intention of claiming

\* At the time Magrath engaged in the effort of sustaining Captain Elliott, he distinctly disclaimed any intention of disparaging Captain Perry, and said to Mr. Hambleton that, if Captain Elliott undertook anything of the sort, he would be much mistaken, in which he has certainly proved a true prophet. He subsequently told Mr. Brownell that he would forfeit his right hand to take back what he had written in Captain Elliott's behalf. This gentleman is represented as being an eccentric person, of considerable ability, and a good seaman. The following letter from Mr. Hambleton, dated in the following July, will show his fate, and that of two others of the five signers of the extraordinary letter from the Niagara. "Magrath has at length put an end to his wretched life. He had been much deranged in his mind for several days, and yesterday, without any cause, except an imaginary one, attempted to dirk me. I was so fortunate as to parry his blows until he was secured. At about eleven o'clock last night he blew his brains out. I have not seen his body, although it is in the next room, the one I used to occupy. It is said to be a most shocking sight. The top of his head is blown off, and his brains are scattered all over the walls and ceiling. How singular the fate of the officers of the Niagara! Smith, Edwards, and Magrath all gone!"

more credit, and staking his life upon the issue ; and that either he or Perry should fall. It is not unfrequently the misfortune of those who boast overmuch, and are wise beyond their generation, to involve themselves in great absurdities. In one of his self-praising moods, Captain Elliott mentioned that the Niagara's missing stays off Malden on a certain occasion, in presence of the enemy, was done by him intentionally, being a stratagem to imbolden the British by the idea that our squadron was badly manned. Unfortunately, on the very next day, Lieutenant Edwards, who had been officer of the deck at the time, on speaking of the same subject, took the whole blame to himself, he having, through an error of judgment, given orders prematurely to haul the head yards.

When heated by the least opposition of opinion on the part of his officers, there was no degree of extravagance that he would not give way to in his opinions. He stated, on one occasion, that the American flag, for the first time since the declaration of the war, had been disgraced on board the Lawrence. Being reminded that she was in a sinking condition, he said she should have sunk rather than struck. Of all his various suggestions, however, the most extravagant was, that it would be a serious question between the British and American governments whether Perry were not a prisoner of war.

These sarcasms might be innocently indulged in by Captain Elliott ; but when repeated by the officers, now fairly arrayed in opposing parties, the consequences were very different. Purser Magrath, who certainly could not be called a non-combatant, led the way in the first duel with Acting-master Brownell ; others followed in almost uninterrupted succession ; and eventually, not long after Captain Elliott's removal, young Senat, who commanded the Porcupine during the action, lost his life in a duel with Acting-master Macdonald. In order to obtain adherents among the men—for they also had been involved in the controversy about their ships, and had become clamorous partisans—they were allowed to go much on shore, and furnished with money. Not being under the restraint of a wholesome awe, they committed every description of disorder, fought among themselves about the battle, insulted the citizens, and pillaged their henroosts. The hospitals being prematurely broken up during the winter, and the invalids imperfectly attended, many of them died. Everything was misrule and disorder among a squadron which had recently been so contented. Officers and men were equally anxious to escape ; the former by obtaining leave of absence, and the latter, after the prize-money had been received, by desertion. Desertion became at length so dangerous an offence on the station, that, soon after Cap



tain Elliott was superseded, three men were executed, two marines being shot, and one unfortunate seaman hung. All of them had been in the action, and two had been wounded. The following extract of a letter from Commodore Sinclair, soon after his arrival at Erie, conveys a lively idea of the state in which the command was delivered up to him. "I found, as you no doubt have been informed, the station in a most deplorable state. To undertake giving you an idea of it is out of the question : system, order, and discipline had given way to irregularity, disorder, and anarchy ; to restore all this has cost me much labour." Such was the condition to which the squadron, left so orderly by Captain Perry without the infliction of punishment, at least in his own ship, was ere long reduced, chiefly by the efforts of Captain Elliott to make friends, and recover by certificates what he had lost in the battle on Lake Erie.

Let us return from the unpleasant task of reviewing these miserable transactions, which are only here adverted to because they were attended with after consequences, to follow the course of Captain Perry on his homeward journey. He arrived at Buffalo on the twenty-fourth of October, still accompanied by General Harrison and Commodore Barclay. From thence he wrote to deliver up the command of the squadron to Cap-

tain Elliott, and there he separated from General Harrison, with the kindest feelings on both parts, and from his gallant prisoner, who returned to Canada on the parole which Perry had so earnestly exerted himself to procure for him, and furnished, moreover, with an ample loan to defray his expenses. From Buffalo he wrote to his brother in England in relation to the state of his health and his hope of soon reaching that place. This letter being examined by the United States' marshal at Boston, to which place it had been forwarded, in fulfilment of his duty to examine all letters written by prisoners, he sent a copy of it to the Hon. Christopher G. Champlin, the uncle of Mrs. Perry, in the belief that it would be gratifying to that lady's feelings to notice the way in which her husband was spoken of by his vanquished enemy. The following is the closing passage of his letter. "The treatment I have received from Captain Perry has been noble indeed. It can be equalled only by his bravery and intrepidity in action. Since the battle, he has been like a brother to me. He has obtained for me an unconditional parole. I mean to make use of it to get to England so soon as my wound will permit." At a public dinner, followed by a ball, given in honour of this gallant officer at Terrebonne, in Canada, he took occasion, in reply to a complimentary speech, to notice the unusual kindness which he had re-

ceived from Captain Perry ; he said that his humanity to his prisoners would alone have immortalized him, and gave as a toast, in conclusion, " Commodore Perry, the gallant and generous enemy."

On taking leave of Perry, Barclay had presented him with his sextant as a memento of his regard ; and some months after Perry forwarded to Barclay a highly-finished American rifle, made with the greatest possible care by a celebrated gunsmith of Albany, expressly for him.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Perry's Homeward Journey.—Reception in the Villages.—At Utica.—Schenectady.—Albany.—Memoir of Alexander Perry.—Reception in Connecticut.—Providence.—Newport.—Visits New-York.—Entertainments.—President's Notice of the Battle.—Honours and Rewards from Congress.—Prize Money.—Visit to Washington.—Reception.—Entertainment at Baltimore.—Honours from Pennsylvania.—Return to Newport.—Visit to Boston.—Review.—Entertainment.—Affair of the Nimrod.—Appointed to the Java.—Burning of Washington.—Perry commands a Battery on the Potomac.—Annoys the Enemy in their Descent.—Attack on Baltimore.—Equipment of Flying Squadrons.—Perry Appointed to One.—Instructions for his Cruise.—Peace with England.*

THE journey of Perry towards his home was a triumphal progress. At every village through which he passed, the inhabitants left their toils and pressed forward to receive him; the schools were dismissed, and master and boys rushed forth to see the young hero of Erie, the deliverer of the frontier, who had stayed the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the avenging savage. Those who had themselves been frontiersmen within the last

ten or twenty years, could well appreciate the obligation which had been conferred upon their remoter brethren. Wherever Perry passed a night, illuminations, hastily-prepared festivities, and rude but hearty hospitality, conveyed to him a nation's gratitude. He was accompanied in his journey by Sailing-master Taylor, of the *Lawrence*; by his young brother, James Alexander; by his boat's crew; and by a revolutionary fifer, Cyrus Tiffany by name, a sort of amphibious warrior, who, having fought by land and water, and being already stricken in years, allowed himself considerable license of speech, and, having wit at will, had been a source of great amusement to the crew of the *Lawrence*. These officers and men were accompanying Captain Perry to his old command at Newport, whence the whole of them had followed him.

As Perry approached the larger towns, his reception became more imposing; and, when they were not very remote from each other, deputations accompanied him from place to place. At Utica he was presented with a complimentary address from the citizens, and invited to a public dinner, hastily prepared. From Schenectady he was accompanied along the Albany road by a numerous concourse; and at a considerable distance from the city he was met by the mayor, recorder, and common council, escorted by a corps of volunteer

cavalry, and a large assemblage of citizens, mounted and in carriages, who, after greeting him with hearty and enthusiastic cheers, attended him in procession towards the city. As he entered its precincts a federal salute was fired, after which he was received in the council-hall of the Capitol by the mayor, who addressed him to the following effect: "Animated by the same sentiment which pervades the nation, the common council of Albany hasten to express their gratitude to you for your late victory over the enemy on Lake Erie. To add to the splendour of the triumph, it was achieved by an inferior force; and thus you have added new honours to the American name, while giving security to our frontier from savage barbarity. We beg leave, therefore, in testimony of the respect we entertain for your character and services, to present you the freedom of the city, and a sword, of which we ask your acceptance; fully satisfied that it will never be drawn but in defence of the rights, the honour, and independence of your country." The mayor then presented him with the freedom of the city in a gold box, and with the costly sword which had been prepared in anticipation of his arrival. Captain Perry readily replied in the following modest and becoming terms: "The honour done me this day by the common council of the city of Albany will ever be recollected with gratitude and pleasure."

To merit the approbation of my country is the dearest wish of my heart. Should I ever be called again to meet the enemy, I shall bear in mind that I am a citizen of Albany, and that I wear a sword, given me under a pledge never to draw it but in defence of our country's rights, honour, and independence."

This ceremony being over, the procession accompanied Captain Perry through the principal streets to the lodgings which had been prepared for him at the Eagle tavern, where he alighted from his carriage amid the loud and long-continued acclamations of the citizens, and was conducted by the mayor, recorder, and other distinguished functionaries to his apartments. In the evening an elegant ball assembled the inhabitants of both sexes, and the ladies had also an opportunity of seeing the youthful hero, and wondering that the individual who had been so terrible to his enemies on the deck of the Lawrence and Niagara, should be here only distinguished for the courteous grace and rare modesty of his demeanour. The next day Perry was entertained at dinner by the common council, the governor, the secretary at war, the principal officers of state, and a vast concourse of citizens. Perry gave as a toast the prosperity of the city of Albany. After he had withdrawn, among the complimentary toasts in his honour was the following: "Father Nep-

tune's settlement on his son Perry: Lake Erie in possession, the Ocean in remainder." Little Alexander Perry was not forgotten by the company; and, in reply to the compliment paid him, like a true young sailor thankful for the good cheer which so pleasantly replaced the scant and musty provender of the lake, drank, "The patriotism and hospitality of the city of Albany."\*

\* And here the writer feels constrained to pay a brief, a passing, and what he feels to be an unworthy tribute to the memory of this noble and chivalrous youth, his shipmate during two cruises, who closed his career at the early age of twenty, a victim of his philanthropy, in an unsuccessful effort to save the life of a drowning fellow-being. James Alexander Perry entered the service in 1811, being then ten years old, and continued in the flotilla at Newport two years; after which he accompanied his brother to Lake Erie, escaped unwounded through the battle, but with sundry bullets and splinters through his hat and clothes, and accompanied the expedition up the Thames. He was to have gone with his brother in his flying squadron; but the peace cutting short that expedition, he went in the Chippewa to the Mediterranean in 1815. On her departure from the Mediterranean he was transferred to the Ontario, from the Ontario he passed to the Java, and, on the departure of the Java for the United States, was transferred to the Washington, in which he returned home late in 1817, after a long and highly-improving cruise. He was now made lieutenant on board the Peacock. Subsequently he was sent by his brother to France to improve himself, and resided a year or two at Passy, in the family of a learned Protestant clergyman. During this time, his improvement in the language of the country and in the general cultivation of his mind was extraordinary; and he made such good use of his time that he came home a very accomplished young man,



Having thus courteously yielded two days of time—which became, at each step, more precious to him as he approached his home—to the hospitable attentions of his fellow-citizens of Albany, Perry continued his journey to Newport. Wherever he passed, he received the same enthusiastic greeting, only graduated by the size of the place and the means of the inhabitants. The feeling

and his extraordinary amiability and cheerfulness rendered him a very agreeable one. He passed through the perils of youth with no other disaster than the loss of a small portion of his chin in a duel with a midshipman of his own age, but which did not materially injure his good looks ; and, soon after, went to sea in the Franklin as one of her lieutenants. Shortly after the arrival of the ship at Valparaiso, he had a night encounter in the streets with two soldiers who attempted to rob him. He successfully resisted them, securing the sword of one of them, when they took to their heels. Going one morning, with a large party of midshipmen and a single seaman, in one of the Franklin's boats on a shooting excursion, in attempting to land on the beach they got unperceived in the rollers, so dangerous on that coast, and which suddenly rise behind you after a long stillness. The boat was turned over, and her whole contents precipitated, with terrible violence, into the mingled sand and water. Then the treacherous wave swept back, carrying with it the boat and its struggling crew. The most vigorous recovered themselves, seized upon an oar or a thwart, and commenced swimming for the shore. Perry, active, fearless, and an expert swimmer, went in ahead of the party, and would have been the first to land, when, hearing the cries of little Coffin, the youngest of the party, he put back to his assistance, and, becoming exhausted by the renewed raging of the surf, perished without accomplishing the object of his self-sacrifice.

was everywhere the same : a blended one of respect, admiration, and gratified national pride. Even the people of New-England, who had, in general been so violently opposed to the war, were carried away by the prevailing enthusiasm. His reception at Providence, as related in a contemporary paper, may be cited as an instance. It is also interesting as bearing testimony to his modest demeanour and freedom from unbecoming exultation in the midst of the intoxicating effects of an adulation which might have turned many an older head.

“ Yesterday morning our fellow-citizen Oliver H. Perry arrived in town from the westward. The flag of the Union was displayed, the bells were rung, and a federal salute was fired by the united train of artillery, to welcome the hero's return to his native state. We understand that he has received during his journey all the attention which his heroism and modesty have so eminently merited. The extremely modest but affable deportment of this popular young hero win irresistibly upon the affections, and command the respect of all who approach him. And, however we may differ with respect to the cause in which his talents are employed, yet, wherever valour and humanity, ability and modesty, are so happily blended as in Commodore Perry, adorning himself and his

country, they justly receive the meed of universal praise.”

At length, on the eighteenth of November, Perry once more reached his home. As he entered the town the bells were rung, the shipping were dressed with national and emblematic flags, and salutes were fired from Fort Wolcott, the flotilla, and the revenue cutter. He was received by his townsmen in mass, and escorted to his home. In the evening the state-house was illuminated. But all sense of honours rendered and distinctions conferred were now lost in the claims of his family. The meeting of an attached pair after a separation of some length must, even under ordinary circumstances, be a moment of transport that cannot easily be conceived; but when that separation has been marked by painful anxieties, and those anxieties have at length been removed in so triumphant a manner, and praise has poured in from so many quarters, and the attentions of a grateful people have everywhere delayed the coming of the beloved object, the impatience must become painfully increased. One might fancy the participation of the public in admiration and attachment must become irksome, and the object almost wished more obscure to be again wholly one's own. The public approbation and attachment seem an interference with those feelings hitherto

sacred. But no wife could less fear the withdrawal of her husband's time and attention than the wife of Perry. Devoted in his feelings, thoroughly domestic in his habits, the joys, the habits, and endearments of home formed a bond for him which patriotism could alone temporarily disengage. Perry's home, too, had gained a new endearment since his departure. He had become a second time a father, and his absence had necessarily had an improving effect upon the appearance of his eldest boy, then not quite two years old. His happiness is thus briefly and strongly expressed to his friend Mr. Hambleton, whom he had left wounded at Erie.

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“I am satisfied you will not require an apology for my not answering your letters sooner, when you recollect that I have had the supreme pleasure of enjoying the society of my beloved family and my excellent friends in Newport. I found, on my arrival, another noble boy, and Mrs. Perry in excellent health ; my oldest has grown finely, and is, in my opinion, charming. Many of your friends have made the most particular inquiries after you. They will rejoice if you again come to this place. I need not assure you how much it would add to my happiness to have so esteemed a friend with me. It is so unpleasant a subject, those ungrate-

ful and envious fellows, that I do not like to think about them. I agree fully with you that it is best to let them alone. I have said much more in their favour than I ought to have done, but I thought I was acting for the best. I think Magrath's statement a very odd one, but, as it respects me, very harmless. I have received a note of apology from him: he is a strange character. The note addressed to me is altogether unlike the original; but truth, you know, is with some people altogether unnecessary.\* It was very unfair to press Turner for a certificate; but he has not given much. I have seen a most impudent letter from Brevoort, and another from Smith. How can men pretending to respectability be so far lost as to lie and prevaricate in that manner? Brevoort must have been drunk, and his dear friend have put those words into his mouth; as to Smith, Elliott told me, during the time he was on board the Niagara, he kept between two guns into the side, evidently to keep out of harm's way. You recollect, he remonstrated against my appointing him to the Caledonia, as altogether unfit for command, and promised me a certificate to that effect. They are a despicable set of scoundrels. I did forget to mention Webster; but it was an omission which I

\* Refers to the note addressed by Captain Elliott to Commodore Perry, a false copy of which was published in the *Erie Sentinel*.

very willingly rectified. Magrath I mentioned without the suggestion of Elliott."

There was little in the duties of his present command to divert him from the enjoyment of his home. Whatever could be done by the flotilla under his orders to protect our coasting trade, and resist the encroachments of the blockading forces of the enemy, was faithfully executed. His arrival at his home was the signal for pouring in upon him from all quarters those complimentary acknowledgments by which a grateful people sought to evince their sense of his services. Invitations to public dinners were addressed to him from all the principal cities, and tender of their services on the part of volunteer companies of troops to act as his escort. The Common Council of the City of New-York passed a series of the most flattering resolutions of their sense of his distinguished services, and that of his officers and men, in the victory of the tenth of September, accompanied by an offer of the freedom of the city, and a request that he would sit for his portrait, to be placed in their gallery. The terms in which these resolutions were conveyed to Perry, and the distinguished character of the individual who conveyed them, Dewitt Clinton, then mayor of New-York, give to this brief correspondence peculiar interest. Mr.

Clinton's letter is dated on the tenth of October, and is in the following words :

“ It is with peculiar pleasure that I transmit to you the enclosed resolutions of the Common Council of this city, expressive of their high sense of the glorious triumph of the American squadron under your command ; an event without parallel in the annals of our country, which gives you distinguished rank among the celebrated men that reflect lustre on the American name, and which has dispensed the blessing of security and tranquillity to an extensive portion of the United States.”

To this letter Captain Perry replied as follows :

“ The distinguished honour conferred on me by the Common Council of the City of New-York, in their approbation of my conduct on the tenth of September, calls forth the warmest sentiments of gratitude. To perform, to the best of my ability, the duty I owe my country, shall ever be my highest ambition. The request to sit for my portrait is too high an honour not to be readily complied with. I beg, sir, that you will accept my thanks for the very flattering manner in which you have communicated to me the resolutions of the Common Council of New-York.”

The result of this correspondence was the masterly portrait, by Jarvis, of Captain Perry, when in the act of boarding the Niagara; and which is not less admirable as a likeness than excellent as a work of art. It is from this portrait that the engraving at the front of this volume is taken.

Among the other pleasing circumstances that gladdened Perry's return home, and evinced the universal disposition to reward his services, he found that his father had simultaneously received from the secretary of the navy, and from the same gentleman as secretary of the treasury, the offer of appointments as captain of sea fencibles, and as collector of the internal revenue for the first Rhode Island district. He had accepted the latter appointment, and soon after removed to Bristol in order to fulfil his duties.

Having business at Washington connected with the adjudication of his prizes, and being desirous to take advantage of the favourable moment to get a number of his officers advanced, as well as of showing his grateful sense of the attention of his countrymen in the numberless invitations which he had received to visit the intermediate cities, Perry applied in December to the secretary of the navy for leave to repair to the seat of government. It was granted to him in the most flattering terms, and he accordingly proceeded to New-York, where



he arrived on the sixth of January, 1814. There happened to be a public ball that night, in commemoration of the victories on our frontier or of some other national event, and Perry, having been invited to attend it immediately on his arrival, yielded to the urgent requests of his friends, and went unexpectedly. A friend of the writer, who was present on the occasion, has described to him the extraordinary excitement created in the room when it was known that Perry was present. The whole business of the evening was for a moment sacrificed to the announcement; nor was it again resumed until Mr. J. O. Hoffman, then recorder of the city, had gone round arm-in-arm with Perry, presenting him to all the ladies. Through these painful consequences of distinction he bore himself with exemplary patience and courtesy. On the eleventh of January he was entertained at dinner at Tammany Hall by the republican citizens of New-York; and when called up to reply to the compliment paid him in proposing his health, he gave as a toast, "The Union of the States;" a union which perhaps no other man had recently done so much to strengthen, by blending the whole country in one sympathetic feeling of pride and joy, and awakening a patriotic enthusiasm in breasts which party spirit had closed against the call of their country.

While in New-York Perry was inducted into  
II.—F

the Society of Cincinnati as an honorary member. He was presented with the freedom of the city in a gold box, having on the top a beautiful picture, in enamel, of the battle of Lake Erie. Here also he received a series of resolutions, passed by both houses of Congress, expressive of their sense of his conduct, and that of his officers and crew, in the battle of the tenth of September. The president had, in his opening message, noticed the victory in the following terms of praise : " On Lake Erie, the squadron under command of Captain Perry having met the British squadron of superior force, a sanguinary conflict ended in the capture of the whole. The conduct of that officer, adroit as it was daring, and which was so well seconded by his comrades, justly entitles them to the admiration and gratitude of their country ; and will fill an early page in its naval annals with a victory never surpassed in lustre, however much it may have been in magnitude."

The battle of Lake Erie being thus brought to the notice of Congress, it expressed its sense of it by the following resolutions : " Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, that the thanks of Congress be, and the same are hereby presented to Captain Oliver Hazard Perry, and, through him, to the officers, petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as such, attached to

the squadron under his command, for the decisive and glorious victory gained on Lake Erie on the tenth of September, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, over a British squadron of superior force. Resolved, that the President of the United States be requested to cause gold medals to be struck, emblematical of the action between the two squadrons, and to present them to Captain Perry and Captain Jesse D. Elliott in such manner as will be most honourable to them ; and that the president be farther requested to present a silver medal, with suitable emblems and devices, to each of the commissioned officers, either of the navy or army, serving on board, and a sword to each of the midshipmen and sailing-masters, who so nobly distinguished themselves on that memorable day. Resolved, that the president be requested to present a silver medal, with like emblems and devices, to the nearest male relative of Lieutenant John Brooks, of the marines, and a sword to the nearest male relative of Midshipmen Henry Laub, John Clark, and Thomas Claxton, Jr. ; and to communicate to them the deep regret which Congress feels for the loss of those gallant men, whose names ought to live in the recollection and affection of a grateful country, and whose conduct ought to be regarded as an example to future generations. Resolved, that three months' pay be allowed, exclusively of the common allowance, to

all the petty officers, seamen, marines, and infantry serving as such, who so gloriously supported the honour of the American flag, under the orders of their gallant commander, on that signal occasion."

The medal thus voted to Captain Perry, when executed, bore on the face his bust, surrounded by the legend "*Oliverus H. Perry, Princeps stagni Eriensi, Classem Totam Contudit;*" on the reverse, a fleet closely engaged, with the legend "*Viam invenit virtus aut facit,*" and on the exergue, "*Inter Class. Ameri. Et Brit. Die X. Sept. MDCCCXIII.*" Congress, on receiving the valuation of the captured fleet, made by a board of officers from Lake Ontario, assisted by Henry Eckford, the naval constructor on that lake, subsequently voted two hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars for the purchase of the captured squadron. By the rule which governed this case, Commodore Chauncey received twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars, being one twentieth of the whole, for his share as commander-in-chief, and Captain Perry and Captain Elliott, commanding vessels of the same force of guns and men, were placed on the same footing, having each an equal share of seven thousand one hundred and forty dollars, being two twentieths of the respective shares of the *Lawrence* and *Niagara*. It was impossible that two persons should receive shares as

commanders-in-chief; and, therefore, no portion of the prize-money could go to Captain Perry for his general command of all the vessels both before and during the action. To remedy this virtual, though not legal injustice, Congress, by a special grant of five thousand dollars to Captain Perry, put him upon the same footing with Commodore Chauncey. Commodore Chauncey has been censured for receiving this large amount of prize-money for a successful battle in which he took no part; but the usages of our own and other services fully entitled him to it, and he could not properly decline what belonged to him as a right. The absurdity originated with the government, in putting two stations, portions of which were nearly four hundred geographical miles remote from each other, and between which there was no navigable communication, under one command. After the state of the station had ceased to be of any paramount importance, by the annihilation of British naval power on the lake, the necessity of a separate command was recognised, and an officer appointed accordingly to command in chief. It may be well here to state, that the commanders of the gun-boats, lieutenants, sailing-masters, and captains of marines received each two thousand two hundred and ninety-five dollars, the midshipmen eight hundred and eleven dollars, and the petty officers four hundred and forty-seven dollars. There

was a peculiar propriety in the special grant of five thousand dollars to Captain Perry ; for, even with this most unprecedented liberality of Congress, his compensation fell far behind that of other officers similarly situated. Both Commodore Chauncey and Commodore M'Donough had the lucrative agencies for the construction and equipment of their respective squadrons ; a source of emolument which, on Lake Ontario, is said to have produced a handsome fortune. Perry, thinking it impossible to do justice both to this and to other and more important duties as commander of the squadron, voluntarily gave up the agency, and all the pecuniary emolument resulting from it. It is not intended, by the mention of this fact, to disparage the other two officers who held and benefited by the agencies which the government freely intrusted to them ; but still to Perry belongs the peculiar merit of having given his whole heart to his country, and having worshipped glory with a single and undivided homage. One comparison between the fruits of M'Donough's victory and his own subsequently gave him pain. The State of Vermont, in gratitude for M'Donough's distinguished services, presented him with a handsome estate, which might thereafter become the resting-place of his children, where they might enjoy a heritage so honourably acquired. Ohio, whose whole lake-frontier Perry had found at the mercy of the

enemy, and her territory bathed in the blood of her own citizens, and those of other states poured forth like water by the reeking knife of the savage, and which he had left free and unpolluted by the tread of an invader, and her strand ungrated by a single hostile keel—which has made him otherwise useful by calling nearly forty towns and counties by his name, and is still converting it to the convenient use of political capital—was one of the few states which had no vote of thanks for his services and those of his brave comrades.

Continuing his journey, Perry reached Trenton at a moment when the Legislature was in session. The business of the body was immediately suspended, a vote of thanks moved and carried, and committees appointed forthwith to wait upon and compliment him. Meeting everywhere with similar demonstrations of enthusiastic regard, he was received at the capital with the most cordial kindness by the president, and ostensibly by all the members of the government. Mr. Howell, one of the senators from his state, introduced him to a seat on the floor of the Senate, an honour never conferred, except by a special vote, on any but members of Congress, judges of the Supreme Court, and foreign ministers. On the twenty-fifth of January he was publicly entertained by the citizens of Washington, the mayor presiding, and the members of the cabinet and many members of

Congress being present. The president took great pleasure in his society. With regard to the secretary of the navy, though he did not openly stem the tide of popular favour, Perry considered him not particularly friendly towards him. Perhaps he did not like him from the very sense of the injustice he had done him in the difficulty with Commodore Chauncey. He promised to promote his officers, particularly Mr. W. V. Taylor, who had been so eminently useful in the equipment of the squadron on Erie, but did not fulfil it without delay; he also made difficulty about giving a purser's commission to Mr. Breese, Perry's secretary, in whom he took a special interest, and for whose advancement he subsequently exerted himself with unceasing zeal until he had accomplished his object. The secretary had also suggested the idea of deducting from the valuation of the prizes—for at this time the question was not settled—the sum necessary to repair the damages sustained in the action; so, in fact, as to make the captors pay for every shot they had fired through them. The secretary, in the sequel, though he had nothing to do with the responsibility of this reward, was seriously disposed to enforce this idea; but, for the honour of Congress, it would not entertain the idea for a moment.

Having no longer motive for remaining in Washington, Perry returned homeward on the last



day of January. Reaching Baltimore early in that day, he visited the Circus, by invitation, in the evening ; and the spacious building was found incapable of receiving a tithe of the mighty throng that rushed towards it, filling all the approaches to it long before the entertainments began. On his approach he was greeted, both without and from the more fortunate spectators within, with hearty and prolonged cheers.

On the following day a dinner was given to him by the most distinguished citizens of both parties ; the committee of arrangements being studiously made up of equal numbers of each. These gentlemen are thus named in Niles's Register : "Messrs. George Stiles, Samuel Sterrett, Isaac M'Kim and Thomas Tennant, two republicans, two federalists, four Americans." Another evidence, if any were wanted, that it had been one of the happiest effects of Perry's victory, by blending all Americans in sympathetic pride, to promote the "union of the states," and substitute for party surnames the nobler distinction of Americans. Nothing could be more complimentary than the whole character of this feast, or more enthusiastic than the spirit which prevailed at it. The spacious room in which it was given had been elaborately decorated by a distinguished artist. At one extremity was a large transparent painting of the battle of the tenth of September, representing the

brilliant and decisive moment when Perry, having borne up in the Niagara, was passing through the midst of the enemy's squadron, firing raking broadsides from both batteries ; while at the opposite extremity, raised above the adjoining rows of tables, was the representation of the stern of a ship labelled Niagara, on the quarter-deck of which was seated the president of the day, with Perry and the invited guests. Behind them rose a mast, braced together with massive bands, on which were inscribed, in letters of gold, the names of Hull, Jones, Decatur, Bainbridge, Lawrence, Ludlow, Burrows, Allen, and Perry, while from the masthead above was suspended a banner, bearing the memorable despatch to General Harrison, " We have met the enemy, and they are ours." The orchestra was filled with amateurs, whose admirable performances contributed not a little to nourish the patriotic enthusiasm that animated every breast. This was at its height when the toast was given, " The tenth of September, 1813, rendered memorable in the annals of our country by the decisive and glorious victory on Lake Erie ;" and, by means of apparatus connected with the transparency, the symbol of triumph was shown in the hoisting of the American flag over that of the enemy. When the uproar of enthusiastic exultation which the toast occasioned, and this unexpected surprise increased, was over, Perry modestly and

briefly expressed his grateful sense of the honour done him, and drank, in conclusion, to the prosperity of the city in which he had been so hospitably entertained. Immediately after his departure from the room, he was thus happily complimented by name: "Commodore Perry, Erie's first and great hero: 'Exegi monumentum *Ære* *Pere-nnius*.'" More enduring, indeed, than even brass or marble, the monument which Perry has raised for himself shall last while Erie shall continue to pour her waters over the cataract of Niagara.

The ladies of Baltimore, desiring to evince, on their own account, their respect and admiration for one who had so nobly contributed to the defence of their country, and who had not merely promoted the cause of humanity by rescuing an extensive frontier from the dominion of the enemy and the incursions of his savage allies, but had exercised its noblest offices towards those whom he had vanquished, invited Captain Perry to a ball given in their name on the day succeeding the dinner. This entertainment rivalled in brilliancy that which had preceded it, and concluded a succession of hospitalities which, while they evinced the admiration of an eminently patriotic city, contributed not a little to enhance it. In the near contemplation of Perry, and in his familiar intercourse, the people of Baltimore were as much struck by the graceful elegance and rare modesty of his

demeanour as they had been enthusiastically prepossessed by his heroism. The journals of the place, in their accounts of these holyday festivities, dwelt with peculiar stress on this adorning virtue of modesty as exhibited in his character; and one of them, not satisfied with its own efforts to convey to its distant readers an idea of the enthusiasm which pervaded Baltimore, sought refuge in the following appropriate quotation:

“ You would have thought the very windows spoke !  
So many greedy looks of young and old  
Through casements darted their desiring eyes  
Upon his visage ; and that all their walls,  
With painted imagery, had said at once,  
‘ Jesu preserve thee ! ’ ”

Whether Perry ate his way through Philadelphia, either in going to Washington or returning from it, the writer has not been able to discover in the files of newspapers to which he has had access. Two separate invitations to dine from different committees exist among his papers ; one of a date corresponding with his passage through the city to the south, the other with the time of his return. The city councils had previously voted their thanks to him and to his associates, and to himself an elegant sword, courteously consulting him as to the style and character of weapon that he would prefer, in order to render it the more acceptable. The state of Pennsylvania also accompanied its

public thanks with a gold medal bearing appropriate devices.

With a heart not insensible to the honours conferred upon him by his country, Perry returned once more to the quiet and endearments of his home. In this retirement, evidences of his country's approbation still followed him, in complimentary resolutions of the legislatures of various and widely-remote states, not satisfied with the tribute of respect already offered to him through their representatives in Congress. Among these complimentary resolutions was one from the Legislature of Massachusetts, the state from whose senate, at an earlier day, and before the triumphs of the navy had partially popularized the war in New-England, had issued the extraordinary resolution, "That it is unbecoming a moral and religious people to rejoice at the success of the national arms in an unjust and ruinous war." The first and only affliction of Perry's married life befell him soon after his return to Washington, in the death of his infant son, who had first seen the light during his absence on Lake Erie, and had joined to increase the happy welcome with which he had been received into his home. His letters of this period to his parents and intimate friends bear evidence of the deepest grief, and the most earnest efforts to sustain and console the afflicted partner of his bosom.

In the following May Perry was ordered to

Boston, to attend a court of inquiry, when the citizens of that place, without distinction of parties, and, in fact, in defiance of the distinction by which some of the most eminent of them had arrayed themselves in opposition to the war, seized the earliest opportunity that had been afforded to them of evincing their sense of the honour which the victory of Lake Erie had added to the American name. He was received in Boston with military honours, invited to review the uniform troops of the town and its vicinity, assembled in the Common to do him honour, and who received him with a salute of guns, and publicly entertained at dinner, to which he was escorted by the various uniformed corps of Boston light-infantry. In reply to the toast by which he was complimented, he gave the following just and elegant sentiment: "The town of Boston, the birthplace of American Liberty; from whence, should she ever leave the country, she will take her departure." Among the toasts given on the occasion, characterized by a point and elegance worthy of this seat of letters and refinement, and by a glowing patriotism, was the following, which will prove prophetic if America is true to herself and to her appropriate arm of national defence: "The American Navy: youngest child of Neptune, but heir-apparent to glory."

Mrs. Perry, having many relations in Boston, had accompanied her husband during this visit.

The gratification of a liberal curiosity led them together to Cambridge, to examine that memorable seat of learning, interesting, moreover, in our revolutionary annals. Here also Perry's coming produced a holyday. The business of the institution was suspended. The president and faculty received him at the entrance of Harvard Hall, and conducted him through the rooms ; and he was invited to review the Harvard Washington Corps, composed of students, whom the president informed him had been " permitted to appear under arms, that they might gratify their desire of expressing the emotion with which they contemplated the character and actions of Commodore Perry."

Having received an invitation from Commodore Hull and his lady to visit them at Portsmouth, where the commodore commanded the navy-yard, when the court of inquiry had terminated its sittings they went to that place, and passed a few days there very agreeably. Soon after they returned to Newport, where Perry was quickly followed by a substantial evidence that the grateful feelings of the citizens of Boston had not been exhausted by the elegant hospitalities which they had extended to him when among them. The citizens of Boston generally, at a meeting held for the purpose of testifying their sense of the services of Captain Perry, had determined to present him with a service of plate, and accordingly ap-

pointed a committee of the most distinguished inhabitants to carry out their intentions. These gentlemen procured upward of fifty different articles of real utility, and caused the principal pieces to be engraved with the following inscriptions: "September 10, 1813, signalized our first triumph in squadron. A very superior British force on Lake Erie was entirely subdued by Commodore O. H. Perry, whose gallantry in action is equalled only by his humanity in victory. Presented in honour of the victor by the citizens of Boston." This elegant and useful gift was forwarded to Captain Perry soon after his return to Newport, with a most complimentary letter from the committee. Not long after, a very elegant piece of plate was presented to him by his fellow-townsmen of Newport; and the Legislature of Rhode Island, some years after, appointed a committee to collect materials illustrative of his achievements on Lake Erie, and invited him to sit for a portrait, to be painted by Gilbert Stuart, also a native of the state.

On the thirtieth of May a Swedish brig, in endeavouring to get into Newport, was chased on shore to the eastward of the harbour by the enemy's brig *Nimrod*, whose boats were sent to take possession of the stranded vessel. Perry quickly hurried to the beach on horseback, with a party of seamen belonging to the flotilla and a six-pounder,



and, opening a fire upon the boats, they returned to their vessel. On the following day the Nimrod stood close in, and, opening her battery on the brig, compelled the crew, with a re-enforcement of seamen from the flotilla which had been sent to her assistance, to abandon her, when the enemy took possession of her and set her on fire. In the mean time, some militia had collected on the beach with two twelve-pounders, while Perry, having sent two gunboats round the northeast side of the island, through what is called the Bridge, and opened a fire on the brig, she weighed and stood to sea. The fire was quickly extinguished, and the vessel got off and taken into the harbour. Several of the people of the flotilla were wounded in these skirmishes, and one killed. The little affair the first day on the beach gave Perry an opportunity of indulging the strong desire which impelled him on all occasions to discover and advance merit. A vast number of the schoolboys from Newport had collected on the beach to see the sport, and, as fast as the shot struck in the sand, would run to seize them. Foremost among these adventurous and fearless youths was a lad not more than eleven years old, who not only exposed himself with the most utter indifference, but lent what assistance he was able in serving the gun and driving away the enemy. Perry inquired as to his name, invited him to call on him, and, with the

II.—G

approbation of his friends, soon after appointed him an acting midshipman.\*

During the summer Perry continued to exert himself to protect the range of coast intrusted to his care, which extended from New-London, through Buzzard's Bay and Martha's Vineyard, to Barnstable and Chatham, from the predatory incursions of the enemy, which had increased of late, since New-England had rallied more heartily to the national cause. From these occupations he was called, early in August, to the command of the first class frigate Java, recently launched in Baltimore. He immediately proceeded to that place to superintend and hasten her equipment. While thus occupied, the British made their famous incursion up the Potomac, with a formidable fleet and army, the result of which was the capture of Washington, and the conflagration of the Capitol, the presidential residence, and the public offices, with not a few of the national archives. Almost the only resistance they met with in their attack was from the battery, manned by seamen from the flotilla, under the command of the veteran Commodore Barney, who stood to his guns, resolutely

\* This young gentleman, Mr. Oliver W. Wood, was subsequently the shipmate of the writer on three cruises, during the last of which, being in the Macedonian to the West Indies, he died of yellow fever, leaving a high character for honour, intelligence, and professional ability.

loading and discharging them, until surrounded, wounded, and taken prisoner.

On the retreat of the enemy, Commodore Rodgers, Captain Porter, and Captain Perry, who had repaired with parties of seamen to the scene of danger, took their stations below the enemy on the banks of the Potomac, and prepared to annoy him in his descent. Captain Perry had the direction of a battery at Indian Head, a few miles below Mount Vernon, consisting of one eighteen and several six pounders, brought to the spot by the Georgetown and Washington volunteers. In addition to these troops, who readily placed their pieces under Perry's direction, he was assisted by his first lieutenant, George C. Read, with a detachment of seamen. As the enemy descended the river, they opened a very sharp fire on him, which was warmly kept up until all their ammunition was expended, when they retired under cover of the bank. Only one American was killed by the fire of the enemy; ours must have been greatly more destructive, though the failure of the ammunition prevented Perry from deriving full advantage from the favourable position which he occupied. In his report to the secretary of the navy, he took occasion to speak in the highest terms of the conduct of the troops associated with him, and the seamen under his orders. He had mounted himself at the commencement of this in-

vasion, and he now returned on horseback to Baltimore.

Subsequently to the capture of Washington, an attempt of a similar nature was made upon Baltimore. As one object of this attack was supposed to be to get possession of or destroy the Java, Captain Perry devoted himself particularly to the defence of that vessel. Owing to the greater size of Baltimore, and the increased numbers which it afforded for its defence, as well as the attack being expected and prepared for, the result was very different from that of the attack on Washington. The English were repulsed in all their efforts, and driven back with great loss. During the time that Baltimore had been threatened with an attack, the mechanics had been enrolled in the militia for the defence of the place, and, being almost constantly under arms, or liable to be called out, little was done towards the completion of the Java. After the enemy withdrew from the neighbourhood of the city, with little probability of their return, the equipment of the ship for sea-service was diligently resumed.

About this time, an effort was made by some enlightened members of Congress to create higher grades of rank in the navy. With a view to obtaining information on the subject, a letter had been addressed to Perry by the honourable Mr. Tait. His reply is interesting, as showing his

views on a subject of great importance, upon which he had reflected maturely. It was as follows :

“ SIR,

“ I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, enclosing the resolutions offered by Mr. Dana. Having had an opportunity of giving to you my opinion on this subject when in Washington, I have but little to add. That a rank above the one now highest in the navy should be established, appears to be beyond a doubt, both on account of the necessity of officers of a higher grade for the due preservation of discipline since the increase of the navy, as well as in justice to a corps that has, in all instances, exerted itself for the honour of the nation. In all our arrangements and regulations, particularly as respects the grades of officers, as far as we have gone, we have had the British navy in view. It may, then, be well to adhere to their customs as to the rank contemplated to be created.

“ The subject of rank by brevet is a very delicate one. It has not been contemplated by our officers, and would possibly create some dissatisfaction. There is much, however, to be said in favour of it. It would enable the executive, for meritorious services, to give the highest possible reward.”

The blockade of Chesapeake Bay continuing to be rigidly maintained by the British forces, Perry saw little probability of being able to get to sea with the noble ship to which he had been appointed, and on board of which were now assembled the flower of the officers who had served with him on Lake Erie, and many of the sailors. About this time a bill was introduced into Congress for fitting out an extensive squadron of fast-sailing vessels, to harass the enemy on his own coasts, to hang about his convoys, to cruise against his commerce generally, and burn, sink, and destroy whatever they could capture, without embarrassing themselves, or giving a predatory character to the expedition by an attempt to send in prizes. Perry, longing to be again in the way of encountering the enemy, to retort upon him the insults which he had recently offered us in our own rivers, and doubting the possibility of getting the Java to sea, now offered his services for the command of one of the flying squadrons, in which it was contemplated to divide the vessels. With the characteristic delicacy to his brother officers which he ever observed, he at the same time begged it to be understood that he had no wish to interfere with a similar application which he understood had been made by Captain David Porter.

Soon after, the bill for the equipment of these flying squadrons, as they were called in the ser-

vice, became a law. Captain Porter was appointed to the command of one of them, and Perry to the other. Commodore Porter collected a number of fast-sailing privateers and letters-of-marque, and Perry, having suggested to the secretary that the purchase of private-armed vessels might check private enterprise against the enemy, by his orders commenced the construction of three vessels of a heavier class, one afterward called the Chippewa, at Warren, in Rhode Island, and the other two, since known as the Saranac and Boxer, at Middletown, in Connecticut. The Chippewa, intended for Perry's flag, measured three hundred and eighty tons; the other two each three hundred and fifty. They were to mount fourteen thirty-two pound carronades, and two long twelves. The choice of model, and, in fact, the whole equipment, were left to the judgment of Captain Perry. The Saranac and Boxer were built by contract, and cost \$26,000, when completely rigged, each in depreciated Treasury notes. The Chippewa, built by days' work, cost \$52,000. The latter, however, had her gun-carriages, water-casks, and everything but her armament. Two other brigs of the same force were afterward to have been built at Derby.

This squadron was destined, in the first place, to cruise in the Mediterranean, and subsequently on the enemy's own coast. Though the cruise

never took effect, owing to the supervention of peace, Perry was already in possession of his orders, and they seem admirably calculated, carried out, as they would have been, by such men as Porter and Perry, to inflict a severe blow on our enemy. These orders are here transcribed, as being on many accounts interesting.

“Having, in the instructions from the department to Captain Porter, to which you were referred for your government, given the necessary orders for the procuring, arming, equipping, and manning the five vessels destined for your command, you will, as soon as the squadron shall be ready for sea, proceed upon a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea; taking care to pass the Gut of Gibraltar under favourable circumstances, and to take such positions between Sicily and Malta, or other situations, which in your judgment shall be best adapted to the annoyance and destruction of the immensely rich and unprotected trade of the enemy with the ports of the Mediterranean and Levant Seas.

“You will recollect that Algiers is in a state of declared war with the United States; though no declaration has as yet been made by the latter, nevertheless a state of war exists, and you will act accordingly.

“At Tunis and Tripoli I have no doubt you



will be well received, and permitted to dispose of your prizes.

“In the ports of France you will also be well received, and perhaps in those of Naples; but whether any disposition may be made of your prizes there is yet uncertain.

“The main object of your cruise is the destruction of the commerce of the enemy; and, unless under particular circumstances, and with a moral certainty of safe arrival at some neighbouring and friendly port, from which you may soon recover your men again, it will be the best general rule to destroy all you capture.

“Your continuance in those seas must depend upon your prospect of success, and the dangers and obstacles which may present themselves. Should you deem it expedient to return into the Atlantic after a fair experiment in the Mediterranean, the season will probably be so far advanced as to permit your cruising to great advantage on the coasts of England and Ireland; and, by frequently changing your position, you may avoid the cruisers of the enemy, and inflict a deep wound upon his commerce and *coasting trade*.

“Although abundantly justified and provoked by the lawless ravages of a barbarous enemy, it is not the intention of the government of the United States to depart from those principles of justice and morality which have ever marked its conduct;

nor will it retaliate upon defenceless towns and villages the evils which its own have suffered. The principles of public law and of civilization will continue to regulate the conduct of its officers, whose triumphs in humanity, though less splendid, will not be less honourable and durable than those in battle."

Let the reader remember that these enlightened and eminently humane instructions were penned within a few weeks after the capture of Washington, and the Vandal destruction of its works of art, its libraries, and its archives rich in materials for history, by a secretary of the navy burned out of his office, and feel a just pride in our American civilization and humanity. Let him remember, as it was in the last, so it was in the Revolutionary war: in the midst of outrages of every sort inflicted on us at home, our cruisers went forth with the same humane instructions.

Meantime Perry still continued to retain command of the *Java*, and to prosecute her equipment in the event of an opportunity occurring to get her out. His family had joined him at Baltimore, and remained there until February, when they returned together to Newport. In this month the treaty of peace with England, signed at Ghent on the twenty-fourth of December, 1814, was received and ratified by the Senate and President of

the United States. Thus was brought to a close a war which, had it been productive of no other results, would have been valuable to us in giving us a name and station among the naval powers of the world which will be our best safeguard from future aggression. The magnitude of the difficulties which our little navy had to meet in a struggle with the mistress of the seas, had impelled our officers to the greatest exertions in preparing our ships for efficient resistance. The discipline of our ships had been of the highest order; but it was more especially to a training at the guns, which resulted in a rapidity and accuracy of firing which had, perhaps, never been equalled, that we were indebted for our almost invariable success in all our encounters with an enemy hitherto accustomed only to victory.

Many of our citizens had doubted the justice of this war with England, and the sufficiency of the cause which led to it; others had objected to it on account of the wretched state of preparation in which the imbecility of the government had left us. Even now, at its close, some contended, with a factious spirit, that we had not obtained the chief object for which we commenced it, inasmuch as the treaty of peace did not formally consecrate the relinquishment on the part of England of the right of impressment. Of such, if any so blinded by party-spirit still exist, we would ask,

Who hears of the American flag being arrested, or in any way outraged, on the great highway of nations? Who hears of the impressment of our seamen from beneath its protecting folds? We have the substance of what we went to war for, if we have not got it by stipulation of treaty, and no one dreams of its being lost. The two nations have gained by the war a mutual respect for each other, a disposition to meet hereafter on a footing of perfect equality, which, with ample preparations for defence on both sides, already made on that of England, will do more to keep the peace between them than all the efforts of diplomacy. To the promotion of this desirable result no one has more eminently contributed than Oliver Hazard Perry.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Algerine Hostilities.—Congress declares War.—Decatur sent to the Mediterranean.—Prosecutes the War vigorously.—Makes Peace.—Perry resumes Command of the Java.—Sails from Baltimore.—Proceeds to New-York.—Project of a Voyage of Discovery.—Perry declines subordinate Employment in it.—Java ordered to the Mediterranean.—Touches at Newport.—Boisterous Passage.—A Man overboard.—Main-topmast carried away.—Arrival at Malaga.—At Mahon.—Squadron visits Algiers.—Our threatened Hostilities.—Perry's Interview with the Dey.—Pacific Termination.—Tripoli.—Syracuse.—Messina.—Palermo.—Tunis.—Gibraltar.—Arrival of Commodore Chauncey.—Naples.—Courts Martial.—Messina.—Difficulty with Heath.—Tripoli.—Tunis.—Algiers.—Lieutenant Forrest rescued from Drowning.—Gibraltar.—Mahon.—Trials of Perry and Heath.—Return Home.—Smallpox.—Treatment of Sick.—Perry resumes Command at Newport.—Tribute of Respect from Officers.*

ON the restoration of peace, Perry was ordered to continue his superintendence of the three vessels of which he had commenced the construction, and which it was intended to despatch to the Med-

iterranean. He was, at the same time, considered as having a certain control over the equipment of the Java, which vessel it was intended should still be sent to sea under his command. During our war with England, the regency of Algiers had taken advantage of the complete employment of our navy to advance the most exorbitant pretensions for an addition of tribute over and above what was already paid by virtue of the treaty, founded upon the difference between the solar and lunar year, by which last they measure their time. During seventeen years that the treaty had subsisted, this difference would be equal to half a year, and the dey demanded that the American consul should, within twenty-four hours, pay twenty-seven thousand dollars for this alleged arrearage of tribute, and then depart from the territory of the regency, with all the Americans who might be resident in it. Though this demand was immediately fulfilled, the consul being threatened to be thrown into chains, with all the Americans in the regency, in case of delay, the Algerine cruisers were immediately sent out to capture the commerce of the United States.

These depredations, begun in 1812, were continued throughout our war with England. That being happily terminated, we had both leisure, means, and inclination to seek redress of the wrongs thus perfidiously inflicted upon us, while

we were sacredly fulfilling our part of the treaty, and even submitting to exactions not contained in it. Congress, therefore, immediately declared war against Algiers. A squadron, consisting of the frigates *Guerriere*, *Constitution*, and *Macedonian*, sloops *Ontario* and *Epervier*, and a number of small vessels belonging to the flying squadron, was immediately assembled at New-York, and, as a pledge of a successful and honourable result, it was placed under the command of Decatur. He sailed on the twentieth of April, reached the Mediterranean on the fifteenth of May, captured a frigate and brig belonging to the dey, which were cruising against our commerce in the Mediterranean, and, appearing off Algiers on the twenty-eighth of June, compelled the dey to conclude a treaty on board of the *Guerriere*—for he refused to treat anywhere else—by which treaty the dey bound himself to restore all the American property which he had captured since he commenced hostilities, or its full equivalent, release all the Americans whom he held in captivity, and relinquish for ever all claim of tribute from the United States. It was, moreover, humanely stipulated, that in no future war, should any occur, should the citizens of the United States, captured by Algerine cruisers, be consigned to slavery, but treated as prisoners of war until regularly exchanged. Another article conceived in the spirit of

humanity was, that in no case should hostilities be commenced by either party until the dissatisfied party should first state its alleged wrongs, and wait three months for an answer.

The three vessels building under Captain Perry's direction were intended to proceed to the Mediterranean. In the Chippewa the writer commenced his professional career, under the auspices of Captain Perry, having received from him an appointment as acting midshipman in March of 1815. In fulfilment of the orders accompanying this appointment, he proceeded to Warren, where the Chippewa was building. There he had several times occasion to see Captain Perry on his periodical visits to examine the brig, and note the progress and manner of her equipment. Captain C. R. Perry lived at that time at Bristol, about four miles from Warren. Thither the writer frequently went by invitation, to pass a day or two in one of the most attractive domestic circles to which it has been his good fortune to be admitted. Captain Perry, the father, was then but fifty-five, a man of elegant and commanding person, having the appearance of still retaining a good portion of the remarkable strength and activity for which in his younger days he had been distinguished ; his features were regular and striking, and his manners exceedingly prepossessing ; at least, such was the impression they made upon a lad not quite twelve, on a first absence from



home, who sensibly felt and gratefully remembers the benevolent efforts of the old gentleman to entertain him with anecdotes of past adventures in the profession upon which he was entering, and useful lessons for his guidance. The same good-humoured efforts to amuse a homesick child, whose only attraction consisted in being a good listener, were conspicuous in Mrs. Perry, whose flow of interesting and agreeable conversation was as unceasing as it was delightful. The attractive manners of the daughters harmonized pleasingly with those of their parents, who were still of an age to take pleasure in all their pastimes. The two youngest sons were then at home, and the three elder occasionally joined the domestic circle, which was the perpetual scene of affectionate and cheerful intercourse, and free-hearted though not ostentatious hospitality.

On one or two occasions the writer was present when Perry passed an evening under the paternal roof. He brought there, in his maturer years, the same affectionate feelings towards the different members of his family, the same interest in their pursuits and pastimes, which are said to have characterized his boyhood. Taking the flute, he would play with a gratified air, which showed that he was receiving as well as giving pleasure, while his brothers and sisters, with such guests as might accidentally have entered, were dancing ;

or, passing the instrument to his father or one of his brothers, he would take his own turn in the more exhilarating exercise. So much freshness of feeling, so much warmth of affection seemed singular, yet were doubtless reconcilable enough, in one who had already filled so large a space in the thoughts and admiration of his countrymen.

Having seen the completion of the three brigs which he had been engaged in superintending, and which it may be well here to state proved to be admirable sailers, and in all respects efficient men-of-war, he received instructions early in May to proceed to Baltimore and resume the command of the *Java*. The three brigs still, however, remained under his orders. The following officers had been appointed at his suggestion to command them: Lieutenant G. C. Read to the *Chippewa*, Lieutenant J. H. Elton to the *Saranac*, and Lieutenant J. Porter to the *Boxer*; most of the subordinate officers also received their orders from him. The first vessel was soon after placed under the orders of Commodore Bainbridge, who had his flag in the *Independence*, and despatched with him to the Mediterranean. On the eighteenth of July Perry reported the remaining two brigs ready for sea, and his control over them soon after ceased. About this time he was unofficially questioned as to whether it would be agreeable to him to enter the navy board, in which there was at

that time a vacancy. He preferred retaining command of the Java.

On the fifth of August the Java dropped down from Baltimore to Annapolis, to receive on board the remainder of her stores. While at anchor off that place, long the capital of the state, and the seat of wealth, refinement, and hospitality, the inhabitants tendered to Captain Perry and his officers the courtesy of a public dinner, which the shortness of his stay there, and the urgency of his occupations, compelled him to decline. On getting under way from his anchorage, he fired a salute in compliment to the city.

From Annapolis the Java soon after dropped down to Hampton Roads, to receive some spare spars which had been made for her at Norfolk. She had originally been ordered to repair to Boston to complete her equipment for a cruise; for it had been decided, after a survey had been held on her at Baltimore at Captain Perry's request, that the whole of her standing rigging would require to be replaced, and that she was in many respects defective as delivered up by the contractors. While she was in Hampton Roads, the secretary of the navy determined to send her to New-York or Newport instead of Boston, and gave orders accordingly. This change of intention was occasioned by the financial difficulties of the day, and the fluctuating value of money at different points, which

rendered it more easy for the government to make disbursements at New-York than at Boston, treasury notes being at par in New-York, while in Boston they were at a discount of fifteen per cent.

The Java was ready to sail from Hampton Roads on the twenty-sixth of August; but a succession of easterly gales commenced blowing about that time, which detained her near a fortnight. During their continuance it blew on one occasion with great violence; several vessels arrived dismasted, and a number drove from their anchors in the Roads and went on shore. With topmasts and lower yards down, and four anchors ahead, the Java rode out the gale without injury. On the sixth of September she put to sea, and arrived off Sandy Hook on the ninth, but did not get to anchor within the harbour until two days later. Considerable time was passed in preparing the Java for sea. A complete new gang of standing rigging had to be fitted for her, and new carriages for nearly the whole of her main-deck guns. During the whole of her subsequent cruise, some new defect was from time to time discovered. Her construction and equipment were nearly complete before Captain Perry joined her. She had been built by contract, and the fulfilment of their obligations by the contractors had not been sufficiently watched on the part of the government.

The ship was still longer delayed at New-York,

in consequence of the government being somewhat undecided as to the manner of employing her. During this time Perry commanded afloat in the harbour of New-York, where many vessels of war were at that time lying. In the month of December, a project had been conceived by Commodore Porter of an expedition of discovery and protection to commerce round the world, to embrace an extended visit to the islands of the Pacific, the Northwest Coast, Japan, and China. Several vessels were to be employed on this service, under the command of Commodore Porter, and it was proposed to hoist his flag on board the *Java*, and employ her on that service, if it was agreeable to Perry. Not understanding, at first, that there was to be any senior officer to himself engaged in the service, Perry was disposed to embark in it; but finding afterward that it was contemplated to give him a superior, and, in fact, to make his command of the ship which had been conferred upon him for gallant service dependant upon his willingness to serve as second in command on a remote expedition, from which he could derive only a secondary share of honour, he declined going, and even considered himself wounded by the proposition. This little misunderstanding, however, did not interrupt his friendship for Commodore Porter, towards whom he continued

to entertain the liveliest sentiments of admiration and regard.

Thus fell stillborn the first American project for a voyage of exploration ; and when we reflect both on Perry's position at the time, and how such expeditions have since been conferred on the score of rank, it must be admitted that his pretensions were not inordinate, nor his objections to a secondary station unreasonable. Soon after this question was resolved, apprehended difficulties in the Mediterranean, growing out of a dissatisfaction of the Dey of Algiers with the treaty which, under compulsion, he had concluded with Commodore Decatur—which dissatisfaction was fomented by the other consuls, who considered our treaty a reflection upon their nations—induced the government to give orders for the *Java* to be got ready to sail immediately for the Mediterranean. On the sixteenth of December, the same day that his order was transmitted from Washington, the *Java* sprung her beam abaft the fore hatch, to which the after cable-bits were secured, while riding out a gale of no great violence in the East River at New-York. This detained her a few days to have the defective beam replaced ; and, as her crew was not complete to the cruising complement, the ship was ordered round to Newport, to await her sailing orders and receive the residue of her crew. It is indicative of the financial embarrassments of the

day, that the Java, on leaving New-York, was obliged to leave her purser in pledge for the debts of the ship. The requisitions transmitted to the government for the necessary funds to meet her disbursements remained unanswered, and the purser was eventually indebted for his redemption to Mr. Barker, the president of the Exchange Bank, who cashed his requisitions.

On the sixth of January, 1816, the Java sailed from Sandy Hook, and arrived at Newport in twenty hours. The writer, having completed a cruise to the Mediterranean in the Chippewa, now joined the Java at Newport, and can draw on his own recollections, corroborated by the logbook and letters of Captain Perry in his possession, for the events of the cruise. A few days after the arrival of the Java at Newport, an event occurred eminently illustrative of Perry's active humanity, and special desire on all occasions to interpose for the preservation of shipwrecked and drowning seamen.\* On the morning of the tenth of January, the wind blowing a gale and the weather being intensely cold, Perry, while seated at his breakfast, surrounded by the comforts of his home, and the tender endearments which were rendered more valuable by the consideration that so brief a season still remained for their enjoyment, received

\* This same feeling was conspicuous in the character of his brother Alexander, and occasioned his premature death.

the appalling announcement that a vessel had been wrecked during the night on the Seal Rock, off Brenton's Neck, which forms the southeastern entrance to the harbour of Newport, and that a number of her crew had been seen clinging to the wreck, over which the waves were dashing furiously. He instantly left his house, with one only prevailing thought uppermost in his breast, that of saving these unfortunate mariners. It is the custom of the service for a commander to send a midshipman, a master, or, at most, a lieutenant, on service of this nature. Perry's only idea was to go himself. He disliked the elegant but frail gigs ordinarily used by our commanders, and always took for himself a large and substantial boat, that united the quality of speed to that of being dry and buoyant. His tastes in this respect were doubtless influenced by his humane desire to aid any who might be in need of his assistance, and proved most useful to him on this occasion. He found his barge at the wharf, with its crew of twenty stout fellows, and Barney M'Kain, who had been in his boat when he passed from the Lawrence to the Niagara, for a coxswain. Stepping into his barge, he said to his crew, "Come, my lads, we are going to the relief of shipwrecked seamen!" His speech on this occasion, like his letter on another, was all that the occasion required. Springing to their oars, regardless, like



their gallant commander, of the severity of the cold and the power of the storm, they forced the boat forward at a rate which soon overcame the distance of five or six miles which separated them from the objects of their solicitude. They were barely in season to save the wretched sufferers. The vessel had gone to pieces; and on the quarter-deck, which formed the largest fragment, the crew, to the number of eleven, had lashed themselves to the rail, at each instant drenched by the freezing spray. Perry rescued these unfortunate men, some of them almost in the act of dissolution, and seconded, as hitherto, by the utmost energies of his brave crew, hastened with them to his ship, and soon had the supreme pleasure of restoring all of them to animation and health. The act was its own best reward, which cannot be enhanced by any commendation of ours.

On the twenty-first of January the purser arrived from New-York, having settled his accounts just at the right moment, and with him came Lieutenant Dulany Forrest, with the ratified treaty of peace with Algiers, despatches for Mr. Shaler, our consul at that place, and orders to proceed on our destination. It blew, however, a gale from the southeast, and it was impossible for us to move. On the following day the wind shifted, and we stood out of the harbour in the afternoon, with the first of a northwester, and the prospect of a very

rapid passage, which was fully realized. Indeed, we were driven across the Atlantic at a rate which, perhaps, has never been equalled by a sailing vessel. On the eighth day out we passed the Western Islands.

A day or two after, while running before the wind, one of the crew, who, contrary to the regulations of the ship, had been towing a blanket over the bows to save the trouble of washing it, got it foul of the hook of one of the bowsprit shrouds, low down on the bow of the vessel. Whether the poor fellow was unwilling to lose his blanket, or apprehended being called to account if it should be found by the first lieutenant, with his name on it, in a situation which plainly indicated an infraction of a necessary regulation, he, though a landsman, undertook to do what the most skilful seaman in the ship would have shrunk from at such a time: to go down by the bowsprit shrouds to the bow of the vessel, when it was frequently plunged in the water, and disengage his blanket. The ship, even more than fast vessels in general, was wet and uneasy, and rolled and pitched after a peculiar fashion of her own. The poor fellow had profited by a smooth time to get down and disengage his blanket, when the ship, making a tremendous plunge, and a wallow which brought the water to the cathead, disengaged the poor fellow, and sent him far away from the bow

on the top of the wave. As the vessel passed on she approached him again, and with one or two strokes he was alongside of her, and, as she went by him at a speed of ten or twelve knots, he shrieked imploringly for assistance.

The midshipmen were assembled at school within a screen of canvass under the half deck on the larboard side, which was the same on which the poor fellow had fallen. There was a scupper between the two guns where we sat, and the ship rolled to port as the man passed, bringing him within two or three feet of us, and bearing his shrieks, which conveyed the inevitable impression of death-notes, to us with horrible distinctness. We all ran on deck, where the appalling cry of "man overboard," then heard by the writer for the first time, had been clamorously repeated. The ship was running dead before a strong gale, under double-reefed fore and main topsails and foresail. The helm had been put at once hard to starboard, and, as the ship rounded to, the foresail was hauled up, the topsail halyards let run, and the reef-tackles hauled out. She thus approached the wind under very short canvass; but the power of the wind and sea threw her over as she came broadside to, sending everything and everybody to leeward with tremendous violence, and seriously injuring a number of persons unaccustomed to the sea, or whose sympathies had made them forget-

ful of themselves. A slush-bucket, which had been used in setting up the mizzen-rigging, and which got adrift on the deck, added to the number and seriousness of the falls; and the marines and after-guard, who were working the braces to heave the ship to, were hurled with violence to leeward. Preparations were making for hoisting the mizzen staysail, and the lee-quarter boat was ready for lowering, with plenty of volunteers at hand to man her, when the captain saw that it would be not only impossible to reach the man, owing to the violence of the sea, but there would be the greatest danger of losing the boat's crew. Meantime, the poor fellow had struggled manfully for his life. He could be seen from the mizzen-top, whence his position was each instant reported, and the mizzen-rigging, which was strung from the top down with lieutenants and midshipmen, swimming steadily in the wake of the ship; and it was evident that he had advanced considerably, from his hat being some distance behind him. At length the captain of the top reported that he could see him no more, though his hat was still visible; and, bearing up, we stood again on our course, with the same speed as before, but with a pervading sadness through the ship. The captain, whom I had hitherto looked on as the most enviable of men, appeared to me in any other light when I beheld him torn by conflicting emotions in his anxious de-

sire to save the drowning man, and unwillingness to expose many lives to almost certain loss in the attempt. It has been the necessary fortune of the writer, in the prosecution of his career, to witness many similar scenes; but the memory of that first one has remained indelibly fixed; and those terrible shrieks, heard, as he passed, almost within an arm's length, seem still, when remembered, to vibrate painfully on the ear.\*

On the fourteenth day out we were within a hundred miles of being up with Cape St. Vincent, after a run of unexampled speed, when, soon after meridian had been reported, the main-topgallant-sail, which had been set during the morning for the first time in several days over a double-reefed topsail, was ordered to be taken in, and was accordingly clewed up, and the men sent aloft to furl it. Ten men were on the yard—for the ship was very heavily sparred—when suddenly the wind freshened, and the main-topmast parted above the cap and went over into the larboard waist, carrying the main-topsail-yard with it, and dragging

\* The writer has seen the advantage of always having stern-ladders overboard in port and at sea. On a recent cruise, the look-out in the fore-topmast cross-trees most unaccountably fell overboard while blowing fresh. The ship, being by the wind, was hove to, with her courses hauled up, by the time the man reached her counter; and an active boatswain's mate, descending by the stern-ladder, grasped the man securely and assisted him in reaching the poop.

after it the mizzen-topgallant-mast. By this deplorable accident, solely occasioned by the spar being dry-rotten, five of the men engaged in furling the topgallant-sail lost their lives ; one struck on the muzzle of a main-deck gun, and was precipitated overboard, where he immediately sank ; another fell with his head on the keel of a boat, turned bottom up on the booms, and had his skull completely divided : three others lost their lives in modes equally horrible, and many were mutilated.

The spectacle which the ship presented at this moment was truly harrowing. Shorn of her lofty spars, the mizzen-topgallant-mast dragged nearly over to the maintop, the main-topmast and maintopsail-yard, with the topgallant-mast and yard hanging over the larboard gangway nearly to the water, now swinging off from the ship's side as she rolled heavily to port, now thrashing violently against the side and main rigging as she returned to starboard, and all the while some five or six of our men clinging to the topgallant-yard, the topmast cross-trees, and different parts of the wreck, watching an opportunity to detach themselves from it and reach a place of safety in the main rigging, with an earnest anxiety equalled by that of the agonized spectators, while, at the same time, shrieks and groans, proceeding from the wounded and dying on different parts of the

decks, and pathetic cries for assistance from others in the top, crushed with a terrible pressure by the rigging which sustained the weight of the suspended wreck. The pain of a bloody and hard-fought action could scarcely surpass that of such a scene. As the readiest means of relieving the unfortunate men still clinging to the wreck, the ship was immediately rounded to on the larboard tack, so as to bring the wreck to windward, where it became stationary, and those who had been taking such a terrific swing were speedily rescued.

On clearing the wreck and getting down the fragments of the mast, it was found entirely rotten; and, on inquiry among those who were best acquainted with the equipment of the ship, instituted by a formal survey, the spar was found to have remained, with others, exposed to the sun and weather in Baltimore for nearly two years. Others of the ship's spars were found in the same predicament, and were, at the earliest occasion, replaced. The after part of the main-deck on the starboard side became a temporary cockpit, and Doctor Parsons, who had been so active and useful on Lake Erie, and had saved so many lives there, had for some hours occupation for all his skill. Almost every operation in use in surgery was required to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded. The man who had fallen on the boat was quickly trepanned, though scarcely any hope existed of his re-

covery, and he soon after died. Ere long, four of the killed were decently laid out, dressed in white frocks and blue trousers, and placed side by side on gratings standing upon shot boxes; and, on the following morning, they were sewed up in their hammocks, and committed together to the deep. From the gloom occasioned by this dreadful casualty, the ship was long in recovering, and the impression can never be effaced from any one who witnessed it.

One ludicrous incident, which, when first stated, provoked an unseemly though irresistible smile, connected itself with the accident: it is illustrative alike of the reckless character of the sailor and the Irishman. One of the men on the main-topgallant-mast engaged in furling the sail was a humorous and cheerful Irishman, by the name of Dennis O'Dougherty. It happened at this time that a gang of hands was employed in passing the shot from the main-deck battery into the shot-lockers below, to relieve the excessive rolling of the ship; and Dennis, being precipitated from the main-topgallant-yard, struck the main-stay, and, bounding towards the main-hatch, dropped among the group waiting until the shot was taken from them, and, knocking the shot out of the hands of one of them, landed on his feet with the brief ejaculation "Here's Dennis!" and walked off as unconcerned as if he had been making any ordi-



nary excursion. The man became a sort of privileged character, like old Tiffany, the revolutionary fifer, who had played before the tent of Washington, and served with distinction on Lake Erie; and the expression "Here's Dennis!" became a cant phrase among the men, and a species of apology for any sudden intrusion.

The loss of our main-topmast, and a gale of some violence which soon after occurred, delayed us twenty-four hours; we then made sail on our course. On the twenty-first day out from Newport, being on the thirteenth of February, we arrived off Gibraltar, and, after communicating with the shore without anchoring, we made sail for Malaga, and arrived there on the following morning. A day or two after we arrived, the captain went on shore to pay his respects to the governor, and, having passed the remainder of the day with the consul, was returning to his boat in the night, when he was rudely interrupted, in front of the guard-house on the quay, by the sentinel throwing his musket in front of him, probably from having passed on his post; at the same time, another soldier stepped out, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, attempted to arrest him. He pushed them both from him with violence, and, drawing his sword, advanced upon them, when they made off, leaving him in possession of the post. The captain returned at once to the consul's, and, taking him

with him, proceeded to the governor's, and, stating the insult that had been offered to him, demanded reparation. The governor ordered the officer of the guard to be placed immediately under arrest, and promised that the affair should be properly inquired into, and justice awarded where it might be due.

Sailing from Malaga on the twenty-second of February, we arrived at Port Mahon on the seventh of March. There we found the frigate *United States*, Commodore John Shaw; *Constellation*, Captain Charles Gordon; *Erie* sloop, Commander William Crane; and *Ontario*, Commander John Downes. After remaining a few weeks at Mahon, the whole squadron sailed on the fifth of April for Algiers, off which place it arrived on the eighth of the same month. There we found the English fleet, under Lord Exmouth, consisting of six line-of-battle ships, two frigates, three sloops, a bombship, and several transports. It was anchored in line of battle before the batteries, with a view of giving effect to a negotiation that was then going on for a new treaty, which should recognise the same principle which Decatur had secured for us; namely, that our citizens, captured by Algiers during war, should no longer be reduced to slavery, but treated as prisoners of war, and exchanged without ransom. That Decatur's treaty led to this British expedition, and eventual-

ly to the bombardment of Algiers, there can be no doubt. Brenton, the naval historian, in his account of what occurred, says, "It was not to be endured that England should tolerate what America had resented and punished." In fact, the dey's disposition to annul our treaty grew almost entirely out of the annoyance which it occasioned to other powers, and the intrigues of their consuls. In a letter to Mr. Hambleton, soon after his arrival in the Mediterranean, Perry tells him, "The Algerines are extremely restive under the treaty made with Decatur, considering it disgraceful to the Faithful to humble themselves before Christian dogs. These feelings are encouraged, and their passions fomented by the consuls of other powers, who consider the peace we have made a reflection upon them!" He subsequently received personal confirmation of this fact.

Lord Exmouth had already secured the admission of this principle, first secured for the United States by Decatur with regard to the non-enslavement of its citizens, from the beys of Tripoli and Tunis, and had visited Algiers with the same motive. In the Dey of Algiers, by name Omar, a man of stern and decided character, he met with a less compliant spirit. The dey declined giving an answer on this subject until he could communicate with the sultan; and an Algerine minister was despatched in the British frigate *Tagus* to

Constantinople to bring back an answer, for which three months were allowed. It had been also part of Lord Exmouth's instructions to procure the liberation of all Christian slaves, which he accordingly demanded unconditionally. This demand was rejected; but, on farther negotiation, all the Neapolitan slaves were given up on the payment of three hundred and fifty-seven thousand dollars, and the Sardinians on the payment of twenty-five thousand five hundred dollars. The Neapolitan and Sardinian governments had, of course, empowered the admiral, through their consuls, to treat for the liberation of their subjects on these terms. In fulfilment of this convention, about twelve hundred captives were set at liberty, and embarked on board the transports in attendance on the British fleet; people of all ages, clothed in rags, many of whom had grown old in captivity, with gray beards descending to their girdle, and whose removal from this land of bondage, with the near prospect of a return to their homes, afforded an affecting spectacle. It was a noble and a magnanimous act for Britain thus to claim the liberation of captives of weaker nations, and to insist on securing for them whatever she obtained for herself; still this negotiation, terminating in the payment of a valuable ransom, had a tendency to encourage the custom of kidnapping Christians engaged in the commerce of the Mediterranean, or

residing on the opposite coasts. It elated the Algerines; and the writer saw for himself that, on the departure of the British officers, immediately before the sailing of their fleet, they were insulted by the populace, which threw dirt and stones at them, and otherwise treated them with contumely. It may be well here to remark, that the arrangement made by Lord Exmouth, so much less honourable than that which Decatur had imposed with a tithe of his force, created great dissatisfaction in England; and news about the same time arriving there that, on a recent massacre of the Neapolitan and Corsican fishermen who resort to Bona, within the regency of Algiers, to carry on the coral fishery, the British flag had been torn down from the consulate and trampled on, Lord Exmouth was immediately sent back with a more formidable fleet, with orders, if necessary, to bombard Algiers into submission, which he effectually executed.

On the departure of Lord Exmouth after his first visit to Algiers, Commodore Shaw and Mr. William Shaler, then our consul, had an audience of the dey, and presented to him the ratified copy of Decatur's treaty, which had come out in the Java. Elated by his recent advantages over Lord Exmouth, whose negotiations had been so formidably sustained, he affected not to understand the object of offering him this new copy of an instrument al-

ready in his possession; and, after the two treaties had been read, though word for word similar, he intimated that there was a difference. He then stated the real motive of his dissatisfaction, which was, that the brig captured by Decatur's squadron on the coast of Spain, and seized by the Spanish government on the ground of its having been captured within its jurisdiction, had not been delivered up in fulfilment of our treaty. It was explained to him that, in the treaty, we had merely relinquished our claim to the brig, and that he must demand her of the Spanish government. This, however, he also refused to understand, and broke up the conference with the remark that the Americans were unworthy of his confidence. On the following day Mr. Shaler asked for a second audience of the dey, which was refused; but he had an interview with his vizier, who returned the offered treaty with insulting expressions. Immediately after this interview, Mr. Shaler struck his flag and withdrew on board the frigate *United States*.

By Omar's refusal of the copy of the ratified treaty he seemed to have declared it at an end, and preparations were forthwith made in the squadron for an expedition with all the boats, manned with twelve hundred men, to destroy the whole Algerine navy as it lay moored within the Mole. Part of the force was to be directed against

the water batteries, which were to be scaled and the guns spiked, so as to facilitate the escape of the party destined to board and fire the ships. Captain Charles Gordon was to have commanded the expedition, with Captain Perry as his second in command. The squadron was in a fever of excitement from the moment this bold idea was conceived; every officer and man became a volunteer for the service; scaling and hook ladders were speedily made, cutlasses and pikes ground, and firearms put in the highest order for service: greater enthusiasm for an enterprise never prevailed.

This blow was to have been struck the same night on which the consul withdrew. Every preparation had been made, and complete success must inevitably have attended it, thus sparing to Lord Exmouth, on his return to Algiers, the destruction at least of the dey's navy. Some scruples, however, existed as to the propriety of commencing hostilities in the face of that article of the treaty, introduced in our own interest by Commodore Decatur, which stipulated that either party having cause of complaint should give three months' notice before the commencement of hostilities. From the following note from Mr. Shaler it would seem that he was of opinion that we could not be bound by the terms of a treaty which one party had refused, and that Perry, to whom it is addressed, coincided

with him in the propriety of the enterprise. Perhaps Mr. Shaler hoped to bring the day to declare the treaty, with all its provisions, wholly at an end. "I have received the interesting extracts you have sent me, and I am perfectly of your opinion, my dear sir, that on this occasion everything should be done to elevate the national character. I think that a glorious occasion offers. We have only to seize it with prudence ; and circumstances are such that all the prudence in the fleet is necessary in the management of this affair. I confidently expect that in a few days something may be achieved worthy of notice. I even expect that a ray of glory may be added to your brow. I shall go on shore in the morning, leaving the draught of a note here. I beg that you will give your opinion upon it. I am exceedingly anxious that something appropriate to the occasion should be sent. This is very important."

The result of this business was, that, being deferred from day to day, the preparations were discovered by a French frigate and reported on shore, which led to extensive preparations to meet and repel the attack. Had it still been made, it would probably have resulted in the destruction of the Algerine ships, but necessarily with great loss on our side. After a council of war, the attempt was eventually abandoned, on the ground that, as the treaty, though not ratified, had been in force since



its negotiation by Commodore Decatur, who had been fully and specially empowered to treat, it was so far binding upon us as to require an interval of three months before commencing hostilities.

The project of attack being thus abandoned, Captain Perry was instructed by the commodore to land under a flag of truce, and wait on the dey, with a view to the renewal of negotiations. He carried with him the ratified treaty, in the event of the dey being disposed to accept it. Captain Perry landed in company with Mr. Nordeling, the Swedish consul, and was met at the Mole by the captain of the port, to whom he stated his desire to hold an interview with the dey on business of importance. Our warlike preparations prepared for this new envoy a more respectful reception, and, after a few moments' delay at the house of the Swedish consul, the dey signified his readiness for the interview, and Captain Perry was ushered into his presence.

The dey stated that we had broken the treaty by not returning the brig and prisoners, and therefore it was at an end ; that we were at liberty to avail ourselves of the article which require three months' notice to be given before the commencement of hostilities, so as to receive instructions from the President of the United States, or, if we thought proper, we might commence hostilities at once. If it was determined to take advantage of

the three months' delay, the consul might land under the old treaty, and would receive every mark of respect ; the ships should be supplied with whatever they might require, and the officers might visit the shore with perfect safety. He added, that he felt no desire to go to war with the Americans, as he felt for them the greatest respect. Captain Perry "gave a positive denial" to the dey's accusation that we had violated the treaty ; reciprocated, on behalf of his government and of the commodore, the respectful feelings expressed by the dey ; and promised a prompt answer to his proposition. Captain Perry remarked, in the communication reporting what transpired to the commodore, that, throughout the conference, the deportment of the dey was manly and dignified, his manner being perfectly free from everything like menace, and his treatment as respectful as he could possibly desire. He also stated that he could not avoid expressing the opinion, forcibly impressed upon him at the time, that all the consuls present at the time, being the British, French, Spanish, and Swedish, with the exception only of the last, evinced an unfriendly feeling towards us, and a desire to influence the dey to our disadvantage.

The necessary result of Captain Perry's conference was the return of Mr. Shaler to the shore, the rehoisting of our flag at the consulate, and the renewal of our former relations, until new in-

structions should be received from the President of the United States. Of our distinguished consul-general at Algiers for so many years, Mr. William Shaler, it may be proper here to state, that he was a man eminently qualified for this post by his superior talents, his calm dignity of manner and immoveable firmness, and that he would have adorned the highest diplomatic station in which he could have been placed. He always had vast influence over the government and people of Algiers. He had little respect for them as a military power, though he always did justice to the extraordinary qualities of Omar, the reigning dey on the occasion of our visit, and who afterward resisted with so much energy the attack of the British fleet, exhibiting in his own person a brilliant example of courage and self-devotion. Mr. Shaler's able work on Algiers is particularly admirable for the accuracy of his local descriptions; it is also memorable for having convincingly shown, that the place which had effectually resisted the utmost efforts of the most powerful sovereigns could be easily overcome. It formed the manual of the French in their successful attack, and was most implicitly followed by Bourmont. Had Mr Shaler foreseen such a result of his publication, he would doubtless have abstained from revelations which have tended to the aggrandizement of so ambitious a power; if, indeed, as now appears un-

certain, the capture of Algiers is eventually to be productive of any aggrandizement to France.

From Algiers, the *Constellation*, *Java*, *Erie*, and *Ontario* were ordered to visit Tripoli, to see that all was quiet there, and that our consul was treated with respect. Having fulfilled this object, the four ships proceeded to Syracuse, and thence to Messina and Palermo. Learning at the latter place that Tunis had begun to assume a warlike tone towards our country, and the American merchants in Sicily feeling some alarm for the safety of our commerce, the four ships assembled in the Bay of Tunis on the eighteenth of June. Finding all quiet there, a state of things which their opportune visit tended doubtless to perpetuate, the ships dispersed in prosecution of farther orders, and the *Java*, having only a fortnight's provisions on board, was ordered by Captain Gordon to proceed to Gibraltar for supplies.

At Gibraltar the *Java* fell in with the Washington line-of-battle ship, bearing the broad pendant of Commodore Chauncey, and having on board Mr. Pinckney, our minister to Naples, with his family. It is believed that Commodore Chauncey and Captain Perry had not met on terms of friendship since the unpleasant misunderstanding which had occurred during their service on the lakes, which had led Captain Perry to tender the resignation of his command. The successful re-

sult of his Lake Erie service had probably gone far to remove from the mind of Perry all sense of the injustice and wounding expressions which he had received from Commodore Chauncey ; while, on the other hand, it is believed that the commodore, even while assuming a tone of censure and reproof towards Perry, had never felt unkindly towards him. Both were men of good hearts, and naturally upright and honourable characters. The ordinary intercourse of duty brought them together on board the flagship, and the presence there of a gentleman of high diplomatic rank and distinguished personal standing, with his family, no doubt contributed to smooth the way to a reconciliation. At any rate, they became once more friends, and continued to be warm and useful ones to each other ever after.

About the middle of July the commodore sailed from Gibraltar for Naples, where he arrived on the twenty-second of the same month. The *Java*, which was now in a high state of order, and which everywhere attracted attention as a most beautiful ship, accompanied the *Washington*. The whole squadron ere long assembled in the Bay of Naples. While the minister, who had landed with the customary state, under a salute of guns, was soon plunged into the midst of diplomatic perplexities with a shifting and time-serving government, reluctant to indemnify us for the spolia-

tions committed on our commerce in former years, while under the compulsory government instituted by Napoleon, we had our own internal troubles in the squadron, which lay in a threatening attitude in the bay to give effect to the minister's diplomacy. At that time the younger officers of the service were infinitely more disorderly than now, more given to intemperance and all its baneful consequences. To check this disorder, great efforts were made by the commanders of the different vessels, among whom were some, perhaps, too rigid disciplinarians. As insubordination often begets tyranny, and tyranny again insubordination, the two, reacting, created at length a painful state of things. There was a deadly opposition at that time among the different grades of officers. The maxim had been put forth—more in earnest, perhaps, than was intended—that there was no law for post-captains; and the converse of the proposition, that there was no ready and cheerful obedience for inferiors, was also in a fair way of being illustrated. Captain Perry was a strict and exact commander, enforcing rigid discipline in his ship; still he was disposed, on all occasions, to exercise equal justice to his inferiors, and repress any approach to an overbearing tone. An anecdote, not wholly forgotten by the writer, but more freshly recalled in its details by Mr. C. O. Handy, then acting chaplain of the Java, which occurred

at Naples, will happily illustrate the uncompromising independence of Perry's character and his high sense of duty.

A court-martial, of which he was president, was sitting for the trial of several midshipmen, upon charges preferred by the captain of the *Washington*. The allegation against one of them set forth that he had outstayed his liberty while at Annapolis, for which offence he had been continued under arrest across the Atlantic. The modest and boyish appearance of the youth excited much interest in his behalf. He appeared with one of the lieutenants of the *Washington* as his counsel, who, in the course of his remarks, bore upon the captain with a good deal of severity. The latter, who appeared as the prosecutor, interrupted him by an appeal to the court, to know if one of his lieutenants could be permitted thus to appear in his uniform, and criticise his conduct. Captain Perry replied that he did not appear as one of his lieutenants, but as counsel for the accused. The prosecutor immediately rejoined, that he protested against the proceedings of the court, and insisted that his protest should be entered on the record. Perry forthwith ordered the court cleared, and, upon its reopening, summoned the captain of the *Washington* to its bar, and thus addressed him, in a tone and manner of calm but severe dignity: "Sir! I am instructed by the court to inform you that it

refuses to enter your protest on its minutes, and that it considers your conduct highly indecorous, and cautions you not to repeat it." The captain, thus rebuked, immediately exclaimed that he intended no disrespect to the court. It should be remarked that a close intimacy existed between the two commanders, which had been the fruit of long association in service. The incident only temporarily interrupted this intimacy, which was soon renewed. As for the midshipman, he was acquitted on this charge, proof being elicited that he had already been sufficiently punished.

Nothing definite was at this time obtained from the Neapolitan government towards the settlement of our claim. Towards the close of August the squadron proceeded to Messina. While in this port the navy lost a most valuable officer in Captain Charles Gordon, of the *Constellation*, who, after many years of suffering from the effects of a wound, died lamented by all who knew him. In him Perry lost a warmly-attached friend, just at the moment that he needed all that he could rally around him. It was only a few days after the burial of Captain Gordon, which took place, with every demonstration of respect, on the tenth of September, that Perry became involved in the unpleasant and painful difficulty with Captain John Heath, who commanded the marine guard stationed on board the *Java*. That this gentleman was



generally inattentive to his duty there can be no doubt. Among Captain Perry's papers there are no fewer than three letters to him from Captain Heath, apologizing for neglect of duty and trifling offences against the discipline of the ship.\* These letters prove that he was not a good officer, but at the same time prove, no less by their existence than by their tone and manner, that he had no settled purpose of infringing the discipline of the vessel, or of wounding or annoying Captain Perry, whose business it was to sustain it. The writer can barely recollect him as a good-natured, rather fat, unmilitary-looking, and exceedingly indolent man, who wore his hands in his pockets on the quarter-deck, and his hat on one side, less with a view apparently of annoying the captain than for the comfort of being at his ease. The first serious cause of offence which he appears to have given to Captain Perry was in going into the Bay

\* The following is a specimen, dated Mahon, March 11, 1816 :

“ SIR,

“ The mortifying situation in which I am placed, by conduct highly improper in an officer and a gentleman, I sensibly feel. I am aware of your indulgence in your determination ; but I cherish the hope you are willing to believe that the *unpleasant occurrence* resulted more from the effect of accident than design, and that you will again evince your confidence by placing me on the same footing with my messmates. I have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“ JOHN HEATH, Capt. Com. Marines.”

of Naples in company with the commodore, when, the ship being in perfect order in all other respects, the captain remarked that the marine guard did not correspond with the rest of the vessel. He pointed out to Captain Heath one marine who was particularly untidy, and asked why he was permitted to appear on deck in so dirty a dress. To this question Captain Heath returned what Perry conceived to be a disrespectful and contemptuous answer, which no doubt imbibited his feelings against him, and prepared the way to the unpleasant scene that followed. It was to this and other unpleasant incidents that Captain Perry referred, in writing to Commodore Chauncey, when he said, "The general deportment of Captain Heath towards me, so contrary to the usual address of my officers, and, moreover, his marked insolence to me in many instances, induced me to believe that his conduct proceeded from a premeditated determination to insult me."

Perry being thus prejudiced against Captain Heath, on the evening of the sixteenth of September two marines jumped overboard, in an evil hour for themselves and others, and attempted to swim ashore. Perry hurried on deck when the circumstance was reported to him, took instant measures for the recovery of the men, and sent for Captain Heath, whom the matter doubly interested, the offence being committed by marines, and, moreover,

implicating the sentinels for a want of vigilance. Captain Heath, caring more, probably, for the comforts of his bunk than for the safety of the missing marines, declined coming on deck, and sent word that he was indisposed. Perry, however, repeated the order for him to come on deck, and, when there, ordered him to muster the marines. He did muster them, but in a very careless manner ; and, when mustered, failed to report them, as was his duty, until called by Perry and ordered to do so “ Conscious,” Perry says, “ that such an occasion ought to animate the most careless and inattentive officer to decision and promptitude, I was induced, from such a manifest neglect of duty, to say to him that he might go below, and should do no more duty on board the Java.” Here Perry was manifestly wrong. Captain Heath had been ordered to the Java by the secretary of the navy ; besides, there was a commodore in the port, whose duty it was to judge of such matters. It may, however, be said, in Perry’s justification, that the remark he made on this occasion, though improper, is not unusual in the service ; and the captain making the remark being generally able to keep his word, the matter ends there.

Two days after this occurrence, Perry, having been absent from his ship, returned on board at a late hour, when he found on his cabin table the following note from Captain Heath :

“SIR,

“On the evening of the sixteenth instant I was ordered below by you from the quarter-deck, with these words, or to that effect: ‘I have no farther use for your services on board this ship.’ I have waited till this moment to know why I have been thus treated, and, being ignorant of the cause, request my arrest and charges.

“Very respectfully, &c.,

“JOHN HEATH.”

Captain Perry considered the language of this letter indecorous and disrespectful, and was particularly offended at the time which had been chosen to send it to him. The language of the letter does not seem to us objectionable, nor could the time of its delivery, though unusual and improper, render language, in itself innocent, offensive. Perry thought otherwise; he was labouring under the maddening irritation of that delusion which, even if it were a reality, he should not have heeded, as, had he been an older man and an older commander, he probably would not, that Captain Heath entertained “a premeditated intention to insult” him.

For his own misfortune and that of his biographer, who else would have had the pleasing task of tracing a life unsullied by a single serious fault,

Perry sent for Captain Heath in this moment of frantic passion. On Heath's entering the cabin, Perry asked him why he had thus addressed him, and at such an improper hour. Heath immediately replied in a tone and manner which Perry conceived so highly irritating and contemptuous, that he thought proper to arrest him, and sent for the lieutenant of marines to take charge of him and receive his sword. To the order to consider himself under arrest, Captain Heath said "Very well, sir!" in a tone which Perry conceived insulting and contemptuous. He ordered Captain Heath to be silent; Captain Heath replied after the same fashion. The order for silence and the reply to the order were thus repeated, until, as Perry says, "Passion became predominant, and I gave him a blow." Had passion become predominant at the same instant in the breast of Captain Heath, and had he returned the blow which he had received to the best of his ability, it would have been fortunate for both of them. It would doubtless have been as strange as it would have been a painful spectacle, such a rencounter in the cabin of a frigate between her commander and one of his officers; but it would have wonderfully simplified the after-discussion of the subject. Whatever would have been horrible in the transaction had already occurred. The blow given had violated the seal of state attached to Captain Heath's commis-

sion, and dishonoured the majesty of the nation in the person of its solemnly-appointed officer. A regular set-to would have brought the question within the jurisdiction of club-law; and the parties being thus upon an equal footing, the quarrel would have remained a private one, of which the public might never have heard.

Captain Heath retired from the presence of his commander as an officer under arrest. The following day was a gloomy one on board the Java. The officers and crew had the most profound respect for their commander, and were strongly attached to his person; the victim of uncontrolled passion, he became an object of their pity; he was himself overcome with shame and mortification. Gordon was no more; but he had still sincerely-attached friends, who hastened to rally round him and offer their assistance. Captain Crane, then in command of the Constellation, a warm friend of Perry, and a man of commanding intellect, became his chief adviser. After consultation with him and with Lieutenant J. Macpherson, first of the Java, Perry agreed to place himself in the hands of those gentlemen, who forthwith addressed a joint note to Captain Heath, stating, on behalf of Captain Perry, his deep regret at having offered violence to Captain Heath, and his perfect "readiness to make an honourable and personal

apology, such as would be proper for Captain Heath to receive and for Captain Perry to make.”

By this time, all the marine officers of the squadron had poured into the wardroom of the Java, full of the impression that the whole marine corps had been knocked down in the person of Captain Heath, instead of looking upon it as an accidental rencounter, having nothing to do with any particular corps. The members of the marine corps on the station were men of the highest honour, but on this occasion they gave their comrade very injudicious advice. It must have been obvious to Perry and his friends, that, according to those laws of honour which, however absurd they may be esteemed, military men cannot be the first to abrogate, this was an offence for which there could possibly be but one species of atonement. Instead of returning answer to the friends of Captain Perry, that if he, having passed the barrier of rank which separated him from Captain Heath to outrage his person, would still consider his rank out of the question, Captain Heath would then point out the nature of the atonement he would be willing to receive, Captain Heath, with the advice of his friends, returned answer, “The injuries which have been inflicted upon me by Captain Perry are of such a nature that I cannot receive any apology he can

offer as an atonement, but rely upon the laws of my country for justice.”

A day or two after these overtures were thus, unfortunately for both parties, rejected, Perry was sent to sea in the *Java*, having the *Constellation* and *Erie* under his orders, to cruise off Cape Passaro until joined by the commodore. Having fallen in with him, the squadron bore away for Tripoli, and thence went to Tunis, where it arrived on the eighth of October. All hope of adjusting the difficulty with Captain Heath having now failed, Captain Perry, on this day, submitted a statement of the affair to the commodore, and requested that a court-martial might be convened for the investigation of his conduct. He soon after brought charges against Captain Heath for neglect of duty, unofficer-like conduct, disrespect, insolence, and contempt of his superior officer.

From Tunis the squadron proceeded to Algiers, and thence to Malaga and Gibraltar, at which last place it arrived early in November. While on this passage down the Mediterranean, an interesting incident occurred, which gave the officers of the *Java* and of the whole squadron a lively idea of the admirable seamanship of Perry, and of his extraordinary energy when excited by the hope of rescuing a perishing fellow-being. The whole squadron was standing down the Mediterranean, before a brisk *Levanter*, running nine or ten knots,



under a press of canvass, from studding-sails on both sides to skysails. Lieutenant Dulany Forrest being at the time officer of the deck, was standing in the starboard gangway in conversation with Mr. Fitzgerald, the purser; rather an improper occupation, to be sure; but such things sometimes happen when the captain is below. A boat had been down during the day, and the man-ropes, instead of being unrove and the gangway stopped, were coiled up over the headboard. Forrest was a gay, chivalrous young fellow, and something of a dandy. He was now booted and buttoned to the chin, in a very unsuitable condition for swimming, and was lounging in the gangway, holding by one of the bites of the man-rope, when it slipped from the headboard and carried him into the water. He lost his hold of the man-rope in the water, and, coolly remarking to his late companion, "Tell them the officer of the deck is overboard, Fitz!" passed rapidly astern.

The dreadful cry, to which one never gets accustomed, brought the captain on deck. He took the command in person; and, raising his clear, sonorous voice, which, in its higher tones, we had rarely heard before, he brought the ship by the wind, gathering in her sails as she came to with the speed of magic; and the men, doubly inspired by the desire of saving life and the animating and unusual presence of their captain giving the word

of command with rare tact and judgment, exerted themselves to the utmost. In less than three minutes the ship was by the wind under snug sail; the boat was immediately lowered, and, pulling rapidly astern in the direction designated from aloft, Midshipman T. R. Handy, who stood in the bow of the boat, directing her course so soon as he caught sight of the drowning man, had the satisfaction literally to catch him by the hair of his head as he was sinking below the surface for the third time. He was brought on board apparently lifeless, but the skilful applications of the surgeon quickly restored him; and, soon after, the captain had the satisfaction of explaining by telegraph to the commodore the object and result of a manœuvre which had been contemplated with mingled anxiety and admiration by the whole squadron.

At Gibraltar Commodore Chauncey found instructions from the government, appointing him, with Mr. Shaler, commissioners to negotiate a new treaty with Algiers. Through the friendship of Perry, and his own superior qualifications for the post, Mr. C. O. Handy, acting chaplain of the Java, was appointed secretary to the commission. The commodore sailed for Algiers in fulfilment of this errand, and the commissioners were successful in negotiating a new treaty, upon the basis of that of Commodore Decatur, and solemnly establishing all

the important principles secured to us by that treaty. The brig which had been captured by Decatur on the Spanish coast, and seized by the authorities in Carthagena, had been delivered up by Spain to Algiers, which removed the chief ground of previous misunderstanding. Commodore Chauncey arrived at Mahon with his ship late in December. He immediately announced to Captain Perry that, this being the earliest moment at which the public service would admit of a compliance with his request for a court-martial, it would now be ordered for the investigation of his difficulty with Captain Heath; though he stated that he had received no complaint or charges from that officer against Captain Perry. The court having been convened on the thirtieth of December, the trials of both now took place. The result was, that Captain Heath was found guilty of the charges brought against him by Captain Perry, as before stated; and Captain Perry also found guilty of having struck Captain Heath. Both were sentenced to be privately reprimanded by the commander-in-chief, after which they were restored to duty on board the Java. The respective punishments were certainly not proportioned to the offences; and Perry, having been tried upon so flagrant a charge, should have been more severely dealt with. The consequence of so lenient a punishment was, that he got the residue from the public press on his return to the United States.

These trials being over, the Java was ordered home with the newly-negotiated treaty with Algiers.

Before taking leave of this interesting sea, it may be proper here to state, that, throughout all our cruising in it, the captain facilitated and encouraged, by every means in his power, visits on the part of all grades of officers to whatever was interesting in and about the ports in which we anchored ; granting leaves of absence, for as prolonged periods as the duty of the ship would permit, to those who were desirous of going to interesting cities in the interior, and furnishing the largest of the ship's boats, under the care always of an officer of rank and experience, to such as were anxious to visit points of classic association on the coast, particularly in the neighbourhood of Messina, Syracuse, Tunis, and the storied Bay of Naples. The works in his own well-selected library having reference to the past history and the existing antiquities of these venerable regions, were freely placed at the disposal of the curious, and all encouraged to read. On every occasion he manifested the most ardent zeal and persevering interest in the improvement of the younger midshipmen. They were compelled to devote a given portion of each day to studies connected with their profession, under his own eye, in the cabin, the forward part of which he relinquished

to them for this purpose. A competent teacher was always on board to teach them French and Spanish ; and a good swordsman, to render them skilful in the use of arms. Even the lighter accomplishment of dancing, which their early removal from home might have prevented them from becoming proficient in, was not neglected. Having prepared these facilities for improvement, he made it his constant business to see that they were not neglected ; and many a reluctant wight was compelled, by the terrors of a displeasure which, though only exhibited by a few brief words of admonition, few were willing to encounter, to labour for his own advancement. The writer, in the course of his service, has known but one commander so devoted to this important portion of his duties as Captain Perry ; this one was perhaps more devoted only because he was more successful, having to deal with a less dissipated, less disorderly, and less wayward class of midshipmen than were then to be found in the service, among whom the “roaring Javas,” the cognomen by which they became long after celebrated, were conspicuous.\* There were, however, many honourable exceptions, as the columns of the navy-register will still testify.

\* The exception was Commander M. C. Perry, on board the Concord. Those who were in the Mediterranean in 1831 will admit the superior attention paid to these particulars, and the success with which it was attended.

Perry took the most unbounded interest and pride in the appearance and condition of his ship. Her order, neatness of equipment, and accuracy of evolutions were always conspicuous; and her cabin was ever the seat of an elegant and appropriate hospitality. Himself an admirable musician, the band of the Java was always the best in the squadron; and its stated performances at the hoisting of the colours and at the close of day essentially contributed to maintain contentment and cheerfulness throughout the ship. Every germe of excellence that he could discover among the crew was carefully fostered, and even the singer of a good song was sure of his quota of encouragement. This attention to whatever could render the ship ornamental to the eye of the visiter and happy within, led to no sacrifice of the essential attributes of an American man-of-war. The ship was always ready for service, her battery in perfect preparation for battle. In this respect Perry was the same in the Mediterranean as he had been on Lake Erie.

We sailed about the twelfth of January, 1817, from Mahon, and, after encountering head winds nearly all the way, arrived at Malaga on the twenty-fourth of the same month. Here we fell in with the United States' storeship *Alert*, and received a supply of provisions. We sailed from Malaga on the twenty-fifth, and, reaching Gibralt

tar the following morning, anchored for a few hours to receive some additional supplies, after which we weighed in the evening, and stood to sea with a fine Levanter, which we were all anxious not to lose before getting out of the Mediterranean, and no one so much so as the captain. For several hours during the night we ran at the rate of twelve knots ; even the homeward bound could desire no better breeze. We ran the trades down with the usual delightful weather, but on approaching our own coast we met with very severe weather ; and the ship, being defective in her construction, and already partially decayed, suffered severely, leaking so badly through the waterways as occasionally, in heavy weather, to keep all the pumps going. Canvass nailed over the waterway seams, with tarred oakum, was resorted to with partial success. The winter, indeed, had been uncommonly boisterous, and we fell in with many vessels as we approached our own coast, the crews of which were exhausted from fatigue and want of food. Our captain had the satisfaction of relieving a number of them, and, notwithstanding his impatience to arrive, never hesitated a moment to run out of his course when he saw a vessel having the appearance of being in distress, even without the customary signal. This led us to board a number of vessels, to which we afforded relief. One of them proved to be fifty-nine days from

Bristol, Rhode Island, bound to Baltimore. She had been blown off the coast several times, and the crew were in an almost perishing condition.

Our own ship was also the scene of painful suffering on the passage. Previous to leaving the United States, the captain had caused all the crew to be vaccinated who had not distinct marks of having been vaccinated previously. This practice had not been universal among the other ships of the squadron; and, the day after our departure from Gibraltar, a case of smallpox occurred among the seamen sent home from the other ships on account of the expiration of their term of service. In questioning the rest of the men from the other vessels, eighteen were found who had not been vaccinated; and the vaccine matter that remained on board proving to be defective, these men were inoculated, and, being carefully dieted, recovered almost immediately. Eighteen others, who had failed to report themselves, took the disease in the natural way, and four of them died; three others of the pulmonary invalids from the other ships yielded to the severity of the weather and died. All this sickness gave scope, as usual, to the exercise of the unwearied benevolence which Perry ever exhibited towards the sick under his command. He daily visited them, and inquired as to their condition and wants, and never failed to send from his own table whatever could be grateful to the con-



valescent. Whenever there was any one out of health in the steerage or cockpit, the captain's steward, an oldfashioned Narragansett negro, by the name of Hannibal, with a huge mouth, elephant-like teeth, and a perennial grin, might always be seen descending cautiously the steerage ladder in search of the sufferer, with some dainty from the cabin table, or some tempting preserve from the family-stores, provided for such an emergency by the forethought of woman.

At length, on the third of March, we arrived at Newport, and Captain Perry again resumed those domestic relations which no man ever more fully owned the force of or more thankfully enjoyed. He immediately wrote to his friend, Mr. Hambleton, by his secretary, Mr. C. O. Handy, who was despatched to Washington with the treaty. In resuming his correspondence with this friend, he says to him, "As Handy will probably give you a detailed account of my cruise, I shall say nothing about it any farther than that it has afforded me both pleasure and pain. I shall have much to say to you when I see you. I have, by some means, made out to get a host of enemies about me; but, as I was not capsized by the clamour of popular applause, the noisome breath of the envious and malicious will affect me but little." Here he was mistaken, as we shall see in the sequel. But he presently turns to endearments where he was

safer from disappointments. "I have applied for this station, and intend to devote myself to my family. My boys are, I think, fine little fellows. How happy I should be to have you added to the number of my comforts in Newport. I hope to prevail upon you to spend a part of the summer with me. I am happy to hear that my little property in the Bank at Georgetown is doing so well. It is time for me to begin to look about me, and nurse what little I have." The last sentence alludes to the portion of his prize-money which was not dissipated in the expenses which his celebrity imposed upon him. Though not profuse and never in debt, he had a large heart and lived generously, practising too extensively the divine philosophy, "it is more pleasant to give than to receive," to increase his hoards or add to his possessions.

After remaining a month in Newport the Java was ordered to Boston, where she arrived on the fifth of April. She was soon after dismantled, and he was transferred once more to the command of the Newport station. The duties of this command occupied but a portion of his time, and he devoted all his leisure to the care of his family, and the claims of a circle of well-chosen, intelligent, and warmly-attached friends. Soon after he repaired to Newport, the gunroom officers of the Java, still remaining on board of her, joined unanimously, with the exception, of course, of Captain

Heath and two who were absent, in an affectionate letter of farewell, which has been found among his papers. This was a free offering of their hearts intended only for his eyes; unsuited for, and not intended for publication. As, however, we have not refrained from recording his extreme misconduct to an officer in a fit of ungovernable rage—the only one which, in a life of anxious duties, he ever gave way to—it is but fair to insert here a few passages from this outpouring of grateful hearts, to show the impression that he made upon those who knew him best.

“ You are about to relinquish the command of the Java, and we to separate from you, perhaps for ever. Will you permit us, with the deepest regret for the loss of one with whom we have been so long associated, to lay before you the tribute of our gratitude and esteem? We have seen you in every vicissitude incident to the tumultuous profession of arms, and everything has contributed to augment the esteem which our hearts spontaneously formed. Whether in the hour of perilous achievement, of unequalled triumph and success, or in the quiet circle of domestic life, we have ever beheld the same self-devotedness, the same unshaken fortitude and patience, and the same diffusive kindness. We, sir, owe you no common obligations. During a year of painful separation

from the dearest objects of your affection, you have ever been diligent in contributing to our comfort, and zealous in promoting our interests. In your leaving the Java, we have not only to lament the loss of a beloved commander, but of a zealous and devoted friend. Among the many interesting features of your character, we have recognised with pleasure a steady and unyielding friendship; a promptness to perceive and reward the merits of your officers. It has been said that obligation always created a heavy burden that soon wearied the wearer. But the favours you have bestowed upon us are of a different character. They have tended to cement our hearts the more closely to virtue. You have been the watchful monitor of our errors, as well as the faithful rewarder of our good conduct. We believe that with you we have acquired a fixed character; and while we have in remembrance the distinguishing traits of yours, every vicious inclination will be suppressed. We cannot but hope that some fortunate concurrence of events will hereafter place us again under your command. To that period we look with impatient expectation, while we earnestly hope that you may reap, in the happiness of domestic life, the richest reward of the virtuous heart; and, when you look back to the busy scenes of other days, we beg we may occupy a place in your recollections."

This letter was signed by Lieutenants Macpherson, M'Call, Turner, Stevens, Forrest, W. V. Taylor—all of whom, except one, had been with him in battle—Lieutenant of Marines Howle, Acting-chaplain Handy, and Sailing-master Mull. Most of these officers still survive, and are most honourably known in the profession.

Dr. Parsons having been absent from Boston when this letter was addressed to Captain Perry, separately took a friendly leave of him in a letter, from which the following is extracted, chiefly as illustrative of what has been heretofore said of that most distinguishing trait of his character, his active and persevering humanity to the sick, the wounded, and the unfortunate.

“Understanding you have relinquished the command of the *Java*, in which I have had the honour of serving under you for more than two years, permit me, on our separation, to tender you my grateful acknowledgments for the very friendly and generous solicitude with which you have at all times regarded my best interests and happiness. It is but just to say, that the mere performance of my duty has ever given me a certain passport to your friendship and favour, and I shall ever regard it as the happiest incident of my life that I was so fortunate in being placed under a commander who

has ever been exceedingly active in advancing the improvement and welfare of his officers.

“Permit me also to express the feelings with which I shall ever bear in mind your treatment to sick and wounded seamen. In you they have ever found a kind, attentive commander and sympathizing friend. Your prompt attention at all times to whatever I could suggest for the preservation of health or the benefit of the sick, your diligent inquiries into all their wants, and frequent appropriation of all your private stores for their comfort, are among the numerous acts of beneficence which can never be forgotten by them or me. In short, to your humane exertions is attributable any extraordinary success that has ever attended my practice during the four years I have been under your command.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Perry employed on Surveys.—Revival of his Difficulty with Captain Heath.—Assailed by the Press.—He determines to meet him.—Refuses to return his Fire.—Hostile Demonstration of Captain Elliott.—Perry's Forbearance.—Correspondence between Captain Elliott and Perry.—Perry prefers Charges against Captain Elliott.—Not acted on by the Government.—Captain Heath challenges Perry.—Is arrested in Rhode Island.—Perry proceeds to Washington.—Returns to New-York.—Duel between Perry and Heath.*

IMMEDIATELY after the return of the Java, Perry was employed on a survey of the line-of-battle ship Independence, to ascertain whether she should be continued at her then rate, or cut down to a frigate, she having been found to carry her lower-deck guns too low. He was of opinion that, by reducing her masts and quantity of ballast and stores, so as to raise her bodily out of the water, she would make an efficient and formidable ship. It is to be regretted that the expedient had not been adopted instead of cutting her down, as the writer is convinced, from having sailed in her, that all her old defects would thus have been remedied; whereas, in the process of cutting down,

many new ones have been substituted, and her appearance, originally so beautiful, destroyed. He was also employed, in connexion with General Swift, of the engineers, and Commodores Bainbridge and Evans, to examine the eastern entrance into Long Island Sound, and the harbour of Newport, with a view to ascertaining the practicability of defending the Sound and harbour by fortifications, and also to examine the coast north of the Delaware, for the selection of a proper site for a naval depôt and dockyard. The commission decided that it was impracticable to defend the entrance of the Sound ; but practicable to defend Newport, and expedient to do so ; and also to construct fortifications at the entrance of Fisher's Island Sound. The commissioners did not agree on the subject of the naval depôt, but reported separately. Captain Perry was in favour of Fall River, in Mount Hope Bay, which certainly combines many eminent advantages for a great naval establishment.

Perry had scarcely settled down to the quiet enjoyment of his home, when the agitation of his difficulty with Heath, by the public prints, began to afford him infinite pain. No doubt the national sense of justice was shocked by the insufficient nature of the punishment by which the court-martial had requited his offence ; and the conductors of the press, in their vocation as redressers of



grievances, conceived themselves called upon to mete out to him the deficient residue of justice which his somewhat partial peers had withheld. The very phrensy of enthusiasm which had existed throughout the public mind in his favour gave conspicuousness to his offence, and rendered him the more prominent mark for daily animadversion. Captain Heath had influential friends in Virginia, who brought his case—and it was truly a hard one—before the public by means of pamphlets and paragraphs, and the press throughout the country re-echoed the accusations. Friends and admirers were not wanting to draw in his defence, and recall the memory of his splendid services; but what is the slight titillation of praise to the rankling wounds inflicted by abuse and vilification? Personal abuse had not attained that high pre-eminence and that unrestrained excess throughout the country which now leaves no security for the most virtuous or the least obtrusive; but still there were not wanting censors in those days, who, with so much subject for animadversion, could sharpen their pens for the infliction of deep and festering wounds. To a man of proud and sensitive character, retiring in his habits and inclinations, and hitherto accustomed only, when drawn before the public, to unbounded and enthusiastic praise, it must have been bitter indeed to find himself placed, as it were, on the pillory, the mark for

every unappropriated shaft. That he acknowledged and deeply deplored his fault in yielding, though but for a moment, to the dominion of passion, there can be no doubt. Still, sometimes he became hardened under the chastisement which was too freely inflicted ; and the consciousness of his real worth, a sentiment of which no rancour of persecution could deprive him, excited him to resistance. This feeling is apparent in the following extract from a letter to one of his most intimate friends :

“ I am undetermined whether I shall visit Washington this winter. Your Southern gentry have treated me with so little ceremony, that I shall remain with those who know me, and wait until my services are required, when it is possible they may become more complaisant. I mean those who have thought it such a terrible offence to chastise one impertinent and insolent fellow.”

The single fault of his character, the haughty pride of spirit and the impetuous temper, habitually restrained by modest amiability and gentleness of demeanour, and which only once in his life had broken its barriers and revealed itself in an overt act, may be traced in this passage, which we have quoted that the character of Perry may be seen in its defects as well as in its beauties.

At this conjuncture Perry was far from being abandoned by his friends. Many senators and representatives, who had sought his friendship on his return from Erie, took the present appropriate occasion to remind him of their still active regard. Decatur and Porter, a host in themselves, with others of honourable name in his own profession, hastened to make him aware of their attachment and sympathy. President Monroe, who visited the Eastern States in the summer of 1817, took particular pains to mark his high sense of Perry's merits, and the strong personal attachment which he had long before conceived for him. The president took passage, during part of his tour of inspection of the eastern harbours, on board the brig *Enterprise*, to which the writer was then attached, and Perry attended upon the president in the character of aid, to which he had been temporarily appointed, and accompanied him in that capacity throughout a considerable portion of his tour. The compliment was well timed, and gratifying to his feelings.

It was not until the close of the year that measures were taken by Captain Heath to bring his difficulty with Captain Perry to the only issue that would satisfy the feelings of his corps, or was, indeed, likely to restore Captain Perry to his former favourable station in public opinion, which, with all its scruples, is still the great abettor of the system of duelling. This issue he would doubtless

have encountered immediately after the commission of the outrage. When, therefore, it was intimated to him that Captain Heath was about to call upon him for personal satisfaction, he determined to grant it, and placed his honour at once in the safe hands of Decatur and Porter for the necessary measures to gratify Captain Heath's requirements. On the eighteenth of January, 1818, he wrote the following letter to Commodore Decatur :

“MY DEAR COMMODORE,

“You are already acquainted with the unfortunate affair which has taken place between Captain Heath and myself. Although I consider, from the course he has thought proper to pursue, that I am absolved from all accountability to him, yet, as I did, in a moment of irritation, produced by strong provocation, raise my hand against a person honoured with a commission, I have determined, upon mature reflection, to give him a meeting, should he call on me ; declaring, at the same time, that I cannot consent to return his fire, as the meeting, on my part, will be entirely an atonement for the violated rules of the service. I request, therefore, my dear sir, that you will act as my friend on the occasion.

“Very truly your friend,

“O. H. PERRY.

“Commodore Stephen Decatur.”

Having thus announced this generous and self-sacrificing determination, which shows that Perry had not wantonly outraged either the service or one of its officers, since he was willing to expiate his fault by the exposure of his life without an effort at self-defence, the affair remained for some time in this position. So much publicity was given to the contemplated meeting by the opposite party, that there was great difficulty in bringing it about. The civil authorities were everywhere on the alert, and letters poured in from all sides from the friends of Perry, counselling him against the meeting; some by touching appeals based upon moral and religious considerations; others by arguing against the claim of his opponent, on the score of his having refused to admit of a private accommodation, and determined "to rely upon the laws of his country for justice." In a letter of the third of April we find him writing to an anxious friend, "As regards this business with Heath, it has almost become farcical from the publicity which he and his partisans have given to it. This circumstance weighs more with me than any other. I do not wish to render myself ridiculous." Again, on the fourteenth of May, he writes to another friend, "The only difficulty now is, my adversary has rendered himself so contemptible in this quarter, I am at loss how to act."

But on this very fourteenth of May, another

“difficulty” that he dreamed not of was in store for him; and a fresh “adversary,” learning that he was about to stand up to be shot at, prepared to step forward to destroy what might be left of him after Heath had finished. This “adversary,” who had striven to injure him, but whom he had never injured, and whom he had earnestly exerted himself to prevent others from injuring, was Captain J. D. Elliott. It may be proper to go back to state, that, though Perry was made fully aware of the efforts which Captain Elliott had made to injure him immediately after he delivered up the command of the Lake Erie squadron to him, he had felt too secure of his own position to take any measures to expose Captain Elliott. He was willing, on every account, that the affair should remain in the position in which his ill-judged letter of the nineteenth of September had left it. That he was not ignorant of the intrigues of Captain Elliott is evident from the ample details on the subject contained in the letters from his friends at Erie, and from which the statements contained in the tenth chapter are taken. The following extract from a letter to Mr. Hambleton, dated on the eighth of April, 1815, shows that, at a later period, he suspected Captain Elliott of efforts to injure him by misrepresentations at Washington.

“I am not in much favour with the new secre-

tary. I apprehend that some one has been endeavouring to injure me. If it is the person I suspect, I will no longer remain silent ; but the officers who have given currency to the reports which have set this wretch against me must come forward and avow them."

This shows that Perry had well-founded reason to suspect an attempt to injure him ; it shows, also, that he had generally abstained from any unfavourable remarks against Captain Elliott, and was displeased that his officers had not abstained, in like manner, in compliance with his injunctions.

In April, 1815, soon after the date of this letter, a court of inquiry, consisting of three members, was held in New-York for the purpose of investigating the losses of the President, Frolic, and Rattlesnake. Captain Elliott, being at that time in New-York, in command of the sloop Ontario, applied to the navy department to instruct this court to inquire into the conduct of the Niagara while under his command in the battle on Lake Erie, and whether the Niagara attempted to " make away," as stated in the finding of the British court-martial on Commodore Barclay. The secretary immediately instructed the court, that it having been stated to him that, by the proceedings of a court of inquiry in Great Britain, the conduct of Captain Elliott had been " misrepresented," justice

to the reputation of Captain Elliott and to the navy of the United States required that a true statement of the facts in relation to his conduct on that occasion should be exhibited to the world. The court was therefore directed to inquire into the same, ascertain the part he had sustained during the action, and report to the department. The court proceeded immediately to the examination of seven witnesses, five of whom belonged to the Niagara, while two of the Lawrence's officers were introduced to give a colour of impartiality to the transaction. The evidence of the minority was, of course, borne down, and the court came to the highly patriotic conclusion that, instead of the Niagara making away from the Queen Charlotte, the Queen Charlotte bore off from the fire of the Niagara. It gave no reason, however, why the Niagara did not follow her. The court was begun and ended with the utmost celerity. In the investigation of the case, neither the commanding officer on the occasion, nor any of the commanders of the smaller vessels, were summoned to give their evidence. Perry probably knew nothing of this investigation until it was over; and, had he known of it, his feelings at the time, as quoted in the letter of the eighth of April, would have made him reluctant to appear against Captain Elliott, however unfavourable his opinions with regard to him. Captain Elliott had remained in undisturbed



possession of all the benefit he could derive from Captain Perry's official letter of the thirteenth of September, from his friendly certificate of the nineteenth, and from the patriotic findings of the court of inquiry, down to the time of Perry's becoming involved in his troubles with Heath, the target for the public press to aim its shafts at, and about to become a target for the pistol of Captain Heath. At this conjuncture, on the same day that he wrote to Hambleton about the difficulty in meeting his first adversary, Captain Elliott despatched the following missive to him, which, to prevent mistakes, is printed verbatim from the original.

Sir

Communications which have recently been made me and exact copies of which, I herewith enclose you renders it necessary that I should hear from you immediately, as soon as I heard of your late visit to Washington, I lost not a moment in hurrying off from this place with a hope that we should meet and settle those differences which have so long existed. your sudden, and to me, unexpected departure from that City prevented the contemplated meeting, and my orders to sit on a Court Martial in Baltimore which detained me from this place longer than I at first expected has induced me to return to Virginia, and instead of the personal interview which had alone carried

me from home and which I had so anxiously hoped for would take place ; now compels me to address you through the medium of a Letter. I could most sincerely wish that my wounded feelings did not compel me to address you at a moment when it might seem, if prompted ; by the late public investigation of your Mediteranian command. The wrongs which I have suffered, are many ; and after taking a retrospect of all the transactions connected with our affairs which have been made public, I am at a loss to know how it was possible you could have made such representations as contained in the certificates herewith enclosed, Immediately after the action on Lake Erie you must recollect that reports prejudicial to my character were put in circulation, when I called on you for a written contradiction of them, (your answer I prsume is in your possession) you say in your letter you have no fault to find of *myself officers* and *cru* complement me by saying you are indebted in a great measure for the victory ; “ my bringing the small vessels into close action ” and conclude with a positive assersion that “ the Niagara would from her superior order have taken the Quen Charlote in 20 minutes had she not made sail and engaged the Lawrence,” what Sir has since occured to draw from you such *base false* and *malicious reports* as contained in the certificates enclosed. I will conclude my remarks with one

or two observations and permit you to draw such inferences as your feelings of honor may dictate, hoping that you will never again have occasion either in the society of of the Ladies or that of young Navy Officers to make use of expressions of a similar nature and which too intended to my injury, pray Sir has your memory been so treacherous as to fail recollecting our interview at Erie and that you then said if "I would not dwell on the action" "that you would write a private Letter to the Honb. Scty of the Navy and express your surprise that the Country did not give me half the honors of the victory"

With proper Respect

J D Elliott

O. H Perry Esqr

New Port

R Island

Norfolk May 14th 1818

*Certificates alluded to in the foregoing letter.*

" Norfolk, February 2, 1818.

" SIR,

"In conversation with some of the officers of the U. S. ship Washington, your name was mentioned in connexion with the action on Lake Erie, when Lieutenant W. B. Shubrick observed, that Captain Perry had publicly said your reputation was in his hands, and that the least you and your

friends can say on the subject of that action, the better for you.

“ I at the same time said I was your friend, and, as soon as an opportunity presented, would make known to you the assertion which is now communicated.

“ W. H. BRECKENRIDGE.

“ To Captain Jesse D. Elliott.”

“ Washington, February 27, 1818.

“ SIR,

“ You having called on me for some assertions made by Captain Perry, I can only state, that some time in the year 1813 I saw Commodore Perry in New-York, and mentioned I had received a letter from Captain Elliott respecting the engagement on Lake Erie.

“ Commodore Perry replied, that Captain Elliott had better be quiet on that subject ; that he had understood other letters had been written by him to his friends.

“ The above conversation between Commodore Perry and myself has never been, directly or indirectly, mentioned by me to Captain Elliott until called upon by him here.

“ JOHN HALL.”

“ It is with the deepest regret that the friends of merit observe how much you have been overlooked in the late engagement on Lake Erie. You

are bound, in justice to yourself, to lay before your country and the world your own share of the glory of that day. You may rest assured that Perry is endeavouring to rob you of *all*. I have a correspondent who resides in Newport, and who heard Perry say, in a private circle, when he was representing the action, that when he went on board the Niagara, he found you pale and trembling like an aspen-leaf, and all your officers, and that it was with difficulty he could get you to obey his commands. Although I have not the honour of your acquaintance, I feel bound, by my attachment to worth and gallantry, to give you this information, trusting to your honour as a gentleman and officer not to betray me; for my friends would highly condemn a step of the kind, and Perry, too, knows my handwriting. But I feel confident you will confine this information to your own breast; it is only for your benefit that I give it.

“It would afford me much pleasure to know that you have received this in safety. If you wish to acknowledge the receipt, direct to ‘Miss Mary G. R. Russell, Petersburg, Virginia.’ ”

*Captain Perry's reply to Captain Elliott.*

“Newport, Rhode Island, June 18, 1818.

“SIR,

“The letter which I have lately received from

you has evidently been written for the purpose of being exhibited to your friends, and in the hope that, passing without reply, it might gain credit among those upon whom you have been long in the habit of practising similar impositions. You had much reason, sir, to indulge in such a hope.

“It is humiliating to be under the necessity of replying to any letter written by a person who so little knows what becomes a gentleman. I must not, however, permit you to derive from my silence any countenance to the gross falsehoods contained in your letter, and which it would be an affectation of decorum to call by any other name; such, particularly, is the absurd declaration you impute to me in the close of it, and the perverted account you give of the manner in which I was once induced to write a letter in your favour. How imprudent, as well as base, is it in you, by such misrepresentations, to reduce me to the necessity of reminding you of the abject condition in which I had previously found you, and by which I was moved to afford you all the countenance in my power; sick, or pretending to be sick, in bed, in consequence of distress of mind, declaring that you had missed the fairest opportunity of distinguishing yourself that ever man had, and lamenting so piteously the loss of your reputation, that I was prompted to make almost any effort to relieve you from the shame which seemed to overwhelm

you ? This, you very well know, was the origin of the certificate I then granted you ; and that your letter to me, of which you once furnished a false copy for publication, and which you now represent as making a *demand* upon me, was merely an introduction to mine. Another motive I had, which you could not appreciate, but which I urged with success on the other officers : it resulted from a strong, and, I then hoped, pardonable desire, that the public eye might only rest upon the gallant conduct of the fleet, and not be attracted to its blemishes, as I feared it would be by the irritation excited by your conduct among the officers and men, most of whom, I hoped, had acquired sufficient honour to gratify their ambition, even should that honour be shared by some one who might less deserve it.

“ The expressions stated in your two certificates to have been made use of by me, when speaking of your unmanly conduct, were probably the most lenient I have for a long time employed when called upon to express my opinion of you ; and thoroughly known as, you must be conscious, your character is to me, it was quite needless for you to have procured certificates of the contempt with which I have spoken of you. You might readily, however, have furnished much more ample ones, and of a much earlier date, than those it has suited you to produce ; for you allowed but little

time to elapse, after receiving the benefits of my letter, before your falsehoods and intrigues against me made me fully sensible of the error I had committed in endeavouring to prop so unprincipled a character.

“ If it be really true that you hurried to Washington for the purpose of inviting me to a meeting, it is indeed unfortunate that intentions for which you give yourself so great credit have evaporated in a pitiful letter, which none but a base and vulgar mind could have dictated. The reputation you have lost is not to be recovered by such artifices; it was tarnished by your own behaviour on Lake Erie, and has constantly been rendered more desperate by your subsequent folly and habitual falsehood. You cannot wonder at the loss: that reputation which has neither honour, nor truth, nor courage for its basis must ever be of short duration. Mean and despicable as you have proved yourself to be, I shall never cease to criminate myself for having deviated from the path of strict propriety, for the sake of screening you from public contempt and indignation. For this offence to the community I will atone, in due time, by a full disclosure of your disgraceful conduct. But that you, of all men, should exultingly charge me with an error committed in your favour, and by which you were (as far as a man in your situation could be) saved from disgrace, is a de-



gree of turpitude of which I had before no conception.

“ O. H. PERRY.”

Sir

Your Letter of the 19th June is before me, having been received this moment on my return after several days absence from this state on public business. I have read it Sir with attention, and will do you the justice in ‘ saying’ it is a masterly production of Epistolary blackguardism ; I had hoped my last letter, would have drawn from you some other reply more honorable ; and I am now induced to give you that invitation which I supposed my letter would have drawn from you, in case the certificates inclosed were true. I now invite you to the field appoint your time and place somewhere equal distant from us both, giving me only a reasonable time to join you, after the receipt of your answer when nothing in the power of human controul shall detain me, It might be expected I should answer this vocabulary of false and vulgar assertions of yours in detail, I cannot descent to such blackguardism ; Declamations such as contained in the Letter in question can be productive of little benefit towards a final settlement of the present dispute—and I feel no disposition to procrastinate this business by a useless waste of Ink and paper. I must resort to some other weapon more potent than a ‘ pen’ one which will place

me at once above your *cunning* and teach you that all your former low and ungentlemanly acts shall not shield you from the chastisement you merit. Tho your memory appears a most treacherous one, and tho I have the most horred opinion of your general character, still I cannot think you, so base, so lost, to all sense of justice and feeling, as to have forgotten the manner in which you presented yourself to me on board the Niagara in the action on Lake Erie, the words then made use of, as well as the friendly congratulations I received from you on my return to my own vessel after the battle ; I do not pretend to select any particular place for our meeting, tho I would recommend a senteral situation a place in which we might be strangers, by doing so the object of our meeting would excite no suspisions, and throw no new difficulty in the way ; you shall be made acquainted with the name of my friend, as soon as I hear from you, till then as little writing as possible ; Public business will call me from this place on the 1st next month, I should like to receive you final answer before that time if possible, a duplicate of this will be forwarded a similar reply if you please, and seal with some other seal than the one on your last bearing the enitial of you name

With proper Respect

To

J D Elliott

O H Perry Esqr.

New Port

July 7th 1812

“Newport, Aug. 3d, 1818.

“SIR,

“Your letter of the 7th ult. was delivered to me on my return to this place from New-York. It is impossible that you should not have anticipated the reply the invitation it contains would at this time receive, having before you my letter of the eighteenth June last, in which I implicitly gave you to understand what course I should pursue in regard to you. Most men, situated as you are, and avowing their innocence, would have considered their honour best defended against the charges contained in that letter by first demanding the investigation announced to you, and holding me accountable on failure to support them.

“I have prepared the charges I am about to prefer against you ; and, by the mail to-morrow, shall transmit them to the secretary of the navy, with a request that a court-martial be instituted for your trial upon them.

“Should you be able to exculpate yourself from these charges, you will then have a right to assume the tone of a gentleman ; and, whatever my opinion of you may be, I shall not have the least disposition to dispute that right, in respect to any claim you may then think proper to make upon me.

“I am, sir, your humble servant,

“O. H. PERRY.

“Captain J. D. Elliott, U. S. Navy, Norfolk.”

The charges which Captain Perry had promised to forward on the day succeeding that on which the foregoing letter was written, he was prevented from completing until several days later ;\* they were then transmitted to Washington with the following letter :

“ The Hon. BENJAMIN W. CROWNINSHIELD, *Secretary of the Navy Department.*

“ SIR,

“ I have the honour to lay before you copies of a letter lately received by me from Captain Jesse D. Elliott, of the Navy, and of certain certificates enclosed therein, with copies also of my letter in reply, and of the affidavits of Lieutenants Turner, Stevens, and Champlin, and Dr. Parsons.

“ The conduct of Captain Elliott, partially presented to view in these papers, and still more clearly marked by other acts of that officer within my knowledge, and fully susceptible of proof, imposes upon me the duty of preferring against him the charges which accompany this letter ; and I now accordingly do prefer such charges against Captain Elliott, and request that a court-martial may be ordered for his trial thereupon.

“ The facts upon which some of these charges are founded, particularly those relating to the behaviour of that officer during the engagement on Lake Erie, having been long in my possession,

\* The charges will be found at the end of the volume.

you will expect me to account for my not having sooner made them known to the government, and for having mentioned favourably, in my official report of that action, an officer whose conduct had been so reprehensible.

“ At the moment of writing that report, I did, in my own mind, avoid coming to any conclusion to what cause the conduct of Captain Elliott was to be imputed ; nor was I then fully acquainted with all the circumstances relating to it. Having, previously to the engagement, given all the orders which I thought necessary to enable every officer to do his duty, and feeling confidence in them all, I was, after it commenced, necessarily too much engaged in the actual scene before me to reflect deliberately upon the cause which could induce Captain Elliott to keep his vessel so distant both from me and the enemy. And, after the battle was won, I felt no disposition rigidly to examine into the conduct of any of the officers of the fleet ; and, strange as the behaviour of Captain Elliott had been, yet I would not allow myself to come to a decided opinion, that an officer who had so handsomely conducted himself on a former occasion, as I then, in common with the public, had been led to suppose Captain Elliott had, could possibly be guilty of cowardice or treachery. The subsequent conduct also of Captain Elliott ; the readiness with which he undertook the most mi-

nute services; the unfortunate situation in which he now stood, which he lamented to me, and his marked endeavours to conciliate protection, were calculated to have their effect. But, still more than all, I was actuated by a strong desire that, in the fleet I then had the honour to command, there should be nothing but harmony after the victory had been gained, and that nothing should transpire which would bring reproach upon any part of it, or convert into crimination the praises to which it was entitled, and which I wished all to share and enjoy. The difficulties produced in my mind by these considerations were, at the time, fully expressed to an officer of the fleet, in whom I had great confidence. If I omitted to name Captain Elliott, or named him without credit, I might not only ruin that officer, but, at the same time, give occasion to animadversions which, at that period, I thought would be little to the honour or advantage of the service. If my official report of that transaction is reverted to, these embarrassments with respect to Captain Elliott, under which I laboured in drawing it, will, I believe, be apparent. That report was very different from what had been expected by the officers of the fleet; but, having adopted the course which I thought most prudent to pursue with regard to Captain Elliott, I entreated them to acquiesce in it, and made every exertion in my power to prevent any farther remarks on his conduct, and even furnished him

with a favourable letter or certificate for the same purpose, of which he has since made a very unjustifiable use.

“These, sir, are the reasons which induced me at the time not to bring on an inquiry into his conduct. The cause and propriety of my now doing so will, I trust, require but few explanations. I would willingly, for my own sake as well as his, after the course I had pursued for the purpose of shielding him, have still remained silent; but this Captain Elliott will not allow me to do. He has acted upon the idea that, by assailing my character, he shall repair his own.

“After he was left in the command at Lake Erie, I was soon informed of the intrigues he was there practising, some of which are detailed in these charges. These I should not have regarded as long as they were private; but I then determined, and declared to many of my friends in the navy, that, should Captain Elliott ever give publicity to his misrepresentations, I would then demand an investigation of the whole of his conduct. This necessity is now forced upon me.

“Believing my hands to be bound, and even braving me with the very certificate afforded to him in charity, this officer at last addresses directly to myself, and claims my acquiescence in the grossest misrepresentations, not only of his own conduct on Lake Erie, but of conduct and declarations which he imputes to me.

“ Thus has Captain Elliott himself brought his conduct on Lake Erie again into view, and, by involving with it imputations upon mine, has compelled me to call for this inquiry. He can make no complaint, therefore, of delay in bringing forward any of these charges. Those which regard his conduct on Lake Erie, and his justification, if he has any, are, besides, as perfectly susceptible of proof now as at any earlier period. Whatever the character of that behaviour was, it was witnessed by such numbers as to leave nothing in it equivocal or unexplained. Some of the officers who were with him may still be called upon, and although two or three others are deceased, yet so were they when Captain Elliott himself called for a court of inquiry. Certificates also were obtained from those officers by Captain Elliott while living, the originals of which are in the Department, and it may be seen by them that those officers, if present, would have no testimony to give which could at all militate with these charges. There are many officers deceased from whose testimony Captain Elliott would have much more to fear than he would have to hope from that of the officers above alluded to. A court of inquiry, consisting of three officers, was once called at the request of Captain Elliott, in consequence, if I recollect rightly, of some allusions to the conduct of the Niagara, supposed to be contained in the



British Commodore Barclay's report; and though that inquiry, of which no notice to attend as witnesses was given to any of the commanders of vessels on Lake Erie, could only be a very limited one, and could involve no actual trial upon Captain Elliott's conduct, yet he undoubtedly had before that court all such witnesses as could testify in his favour, and the record of that testimony, if any of those witnesses are deceased, will avail him. Captain Elliott, therefore, can suffer nothing from the lapse of time; and it would, indeed, be a strange pretension in him to claim protection from inquiry into his conduct, at the same time that he is giving notoriety to his own representations of it, and that, too, to the prejudice of others.

"I am, sir, fully sensible how troublesome the frequent examination into the conduct of officers has been to the government, and how disagreeable they must have become. I am aware, also, that the public are justly dissatisfied with them, and that reproach has been brought upon the service by means of them. I have, therefore, avoided asking for this investigation as long as I possibly could do so with any justice to the service or to my own character.

"I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"O. H. PERRY.

"Newport, August 10th, 1818."

Sir

Two months having elapsed since the date of your answer to my invitation for the field and as I have neither been furnished with an arrest or made acquainted with the charge you state would be forwarded to the proper authority by the following mail I have hastened from Falls River to the Honb. Secretary of the Navys quarters and by him have been informed that he has not heard from you for the last two months nor does he know of any transaction between us, I am yet under the impression that you are disposed to continue your old schemes of deception. I must therefore again call your attention to my former communication with a request that you will answer me by return of mail *yea* or *Nay* as I shall leave here for the south in five days.

Boston 3rd Octo 1818

O. H Perry Esqr.

Newport R I.

With proper Respect

J D Elliott

“Newport, October 6, 1818.

“SIR,

“In reply to your letter of the third instant, I have to inform you, that I forwarded to the Navy Department, on the tenth of August last, charges which I then preferred against you. It is not for me to account for their not having been submitted

to the honourable the secretary of the navy. I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“O. H. PERRY.

“Captain Jesse D. Elliott, U. S. N.”

The following letter from the acting secretary of the navy, who, as chief clerk, attended to the duties of the office in the frequent absences of the secretary, accounts for the ignorance of that functionary with regard to the charges.

“Navy Department, October 5, 1818.

“SIR,

“In reply to your letter of the twenty-ninth ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that your communication of the tenth of August last, with the enclosures, were duly received.

“The importance of the subject induced me to transmit all the papers to the President of the United States, conformably to his instructions to lay all matters before him involving the question of court-martial. I have not received the president's decision thereon, which is daily expected. I shall remind him of the subject, and give you the earliest information of the result.

“I am, respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

“BENJAMIN HOMANS.

“Captain Oliver H. Perry,  
Commanding Naval Officer, Newport.” }

The motives of the president in suspending all action on this subject were the same which influenced Perry, until he was thus assailed when surrounded by other difficulties: an unwillingness to reveal to the nation and the world so disgraceful a passage in our history as the conduct of the Niagara in the battle on Lake Erie. It will be seen from a letter, which will be hereafter quoted in its place, that Captain Elliott was not a little alarmed at the prospect of a court-martial, and complained that Perry had waited for the death of all his witnesses.

Whether Captains Elliott and Heath were acting in concert or not, can only be conjectured. While the former was despatching his last missive from Boston, the latter invaded the state with his second, striking terror into the minds of the peaceful and moral inhabitants; and though it is not recorded that Perry was much alarmed, conveying, doubtless, no trifling pang to the anxious bosom of his wife. The civil authorities, made aware of the warlike errand of these visitors, took them both into custody, and only discharged them after they had entered into recognizances to keep the peace and leave the territory of the state. Before, however, they had departed, Perry, who had held himself ready from the beginning of the year, when he first heard of Captain Heath's hostile intentions, to yield him the desired meeting when-

ever called upon to do so, made arrangements to meet Captain Heath in Washington. Being determined to put some limit of time to the duration of an annoyance so distressing to his friends and so cruelly destructive to the happiness of his domestic circle, he caused the following provision to be endorsed on the back of the agreement for regulating the terms of the meeting, signed by the friends of both parties: "Captain Perry desires it to be explicitly understood, that, in according to Captain Heath the personal satisfaction he has demanded, he is influenced entirely by a sense of what he considers due from him, as an atonement to the violated rules of the service, and not by any consideration of the claims which Captain Heath may have for making such a demand, which he totally denies; as such claims have been forfeited by the measures of a public character which Captain Heath has adopted towards him. If, therefore, the civil authority shall produce an impossibility of meeting at the time and place designated, which he will take every precaution to prevent, he will consider himself absolutely exonerated from any responsibility to Captain Heath touching their present cause of difference."

The tenth of October and the neighbourhood of Washington were the time and place originally fixed for the meeting; but Commodore Decatur having passed Perry on the road to Washington,

whither he had gone with Major James Hamilton, of South Carolina, his schoolmate and constant friend, it became necessary for the parties to turn back towards New-York, where they met on the nineteenth of October, on the Jersey shore of the Hudson, above Hoboken, the scene of many a distressing tragedy. Perry was accompanied by Decatur and Major Hamilton; Heath by Lieutenant Desha, of the marines. The principals were placed back to back. Perry's face was calm and unmoved, free from all traces of rancorous feeling, and only varied by a passing smile, and his whole bearing as far removed as possible from all betrayal of his being there present to expose his life without an effort to defend it. The seconds stood aside; the splendid figure of Decatur erected to its fullest stature, and his noble countenance more than usually calm and thoughtful. At the word, the antagonists advanced five paces with a measured step, regulated by the voice of one of the seconds, then wheeled, Heath discharging his pistol towards Perry, and Perry abstaining from firing. Decatur now stepped forward and declared that Commodore Perry had come to the ground with the fixed determination to receive without returning the fire of Captain Heath, in evidence of which he read the letter which months before had been addressed to him. Decatur then observed that he presumed the party claiming to be ag-

grieved was satisfied. Captain Heath acquiesced, through his friend, in this opinion, and admitted that his injury was atoned for. So ended this affair, of which, without entering into the immorality of duelling, or the evils of a custom which soon after deprived us of Decatur, we will merely say, that the rencounter on Perry's part wanted so far the character of a duel, that, though he exposed his own life, he did not jeopardize that of his antagonist. His conduct in this particular was generous in the extreme. If he had given a blow, it had, like other blows given in passion, been provoked by an insult, which in so far placed them on an equality; he would have been justified by precedent in meeting his opponent on an equal footing. His failing to aim at his antagonist, while he allowed himself to be aimed at, was as magnanimous as it was unusual.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Comfortable situation of Perry.—Ordered to South America.—Object of Mission.—Proceeds to Washington.—Receives Instructions from State Department.—Repairs to Annapolis.—Hoists his flag on board the John Adams.—Joined by Schooner Non-such.—Sails for the Orinoco.—Arrives off Barbadoes.—Enters Orinoco.—Arrival at Angostura.—Commencement of his Negotiations.—Unfavourable Feelings towards the United States.—Extracts from Perry's Note-book.—Partially succeeds in his Mission.—Departure from Angostura.—Attacked with Yellow Fever.—Dies.—Is buried in Port Spain.—Impression caused by his Death.—His Family provided for.—Remains removed to Newport.—His Character.*

ONE more winter of domestic tranquillity, of happiness unalloyed, remained for Perry. The difficulty with Heath thus terminated to the satisfaction of the marine corps, the press, and the public; the difficulty with Captain Elliott set at rest by those charges which Perry was at any moment ready to substantiate, but which the president was disinclined to bring before the public, and Captain Elliott was, as Perry was assured, too happy to permit to sleep, Perry now devoted himself, heart



and soul, to the quiet enjoyment of his home. Some time before, he had built a snug little cottage in Narragansett, on the farm which had been settled at the first colonization of the country by Edmund Perry, where five generations of his ancestors had lived in the practice of virtue, and where their remains lay entombed. Thither he retired to pass a portion of the summer and autumn; there he kept his only dumb pets, his little family of thorough-bred colts, which furnished him with the means of his favourite amusement. In the winter of 1818 and 1819 he made farther provision for being permanently comfortable, by the advantageous purchase of an excellent house in town, situated on the parade. Most of his little means, the well-earned spoil of his own arm, were thus invested, but the emoluments of his office were ample for his support in a community where extravagance and ostentation were unknown. In possession, after every trifling abatement, of the rapturous admiration of his countrymen, with a good collection of books of his own, and an excellent public library quite near at hand; surrounded by intelligent, admiring, and deeply-attached friends, with the happiest and tenderest endearments twining round his heart, drawing their nourishment from it and nourishing it, in excellent health, scarcely yet entered in the prime of life, he, if any one, might well be excused in hug-

ging himself with rapture, and exclaiming, not without thankfulness, "Soul ! thou hast much good laid up for many years : take thine ease !"

On the thirtieth of March, 1819, he resumed his correspondence with Mr. Hambleton, after one of those customary interruptions to which his extreme aversion to the pen rendered him liable, and which, almost every time he wrote, made an apology necessary. "You are perfectly aware," he goes on to say, "of my indolence in writing ; and there is no doubt I have offended many persons who were very favourably disposed towards me by neglecting to answer their letters. Those who know me will make allowances. You are to believe anything rather than a diminution of my affectionate respect. I have really no fixed plan as regards public employment, but am, as Cathcart says, 'on the surface of occasion.' If I am ordered abroad, I will go cheerfully ; but I will not solicit anything from the government. They know better, probably, than I do to what I am entitled, and they must determine. I will not submit to the mortification of a refusal. I hope, however, that the Department is not *now* under the influence of intrigue, but that every one will receive his due. I have purchased a house in town, which I am fitting up for my family, and shall probably get into it next month. It is said to be a good purchase, and is situated on the south side of the parade.

It contains twelve good rooms besides the kitchens, and has a large garden. It cost four thousand four hundred dollars, and will require about one thousand more to put it in such order as to please me. Mrs. Perry often inquires after you, and there is no one, I assure you, who takes a greater interest in all your concerns. We cherish the hope that you will, if not ordered away, make us a visit this summer. I have three fine boys to introduce to you." This is the last letter from Perry to Mr. Hambleton. The close of that summer he was not destined to see. Before it was over, there was an end of his hopes, his endearments, his annoyances.

On the day after writing his last letter to Mr. Hambleton, Perry received the following from Mr. Smith Thompson, the distinguished and respectable secretary of the navy, dated at New-York on the twenty-ninth of March.

"SIR,

"We have some very important and confidential business which the president wishes to commit to some of our distinguished navy officers, and has mentioned you as one he is desirous of intrusting with it. The business is of such a nature, and the arrangements necessary to be made to carry it into effect require that I should have a personal interview with you. I wish, therefore, you would

repair to this place as soon as you conveniently can. Be pleased to drop me a line immediately on the receipt of this, and let me know when you will be here, that I may make it a point to be at home.

“ I am, sir, very respectfully,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ SMITH THOMPSON.

“ Commodore Perry.”

On repairing to New-York, Perry was confidentially informed of the nature of the service on which it was desired to employ him. The alarming extent to which depredations on the commerce of the world were at that time carried by adventurers of all nations, using the flags of the new states of South America, in vessels fitted out ostensibly to cruise against the ships of Spain, but extending their predatory visitations to the ships of other countries, and passing, with great facility and in very many cases, from the character of privateers to that of pirates, must still be well remembered by many. The Republics of Buenos Ayres and Venezuela had given most encouragement to these predatory enterprises ; they had issued commissions for privateers, without limit or qualification, to adventurers who thronged from all parts of the world to their ports, which they enriched by an influx of spoil. The question, too,

of blockade, which has been an instrument of plunder in the hands of the most powerful nations, was turned by these rising nations to the same unprincipled uses. Our commerce extended over the world, and, especially in the South American seas, had suffered most severely. The government had determined to put an end to a system which could no longer be endured. But, in effecting this desirable object, it was desirous of not wounding or giving offence to nations whose outset in their career the United States had been the first to hail and recognise, and whose friendship they were desirous of cultivating. To put down a practice which, in interest and honour, we could no longer tolerate, without creating enemies, was a task of no trifling delicacy, requiring in the agent judgment, energy, and discretion. It was this duty that Mr. Thompson was now desirous of intrusting to Captain Perry. Such force as he might deem necessary was to be placed at his disposal, and he was to go out in a diplomatic as well as in a military character, receiving extra compensation for his diplomatic services from the department of state, under whose orders he was to be placed for that portion of his duties. Strong as were the ties that bound Perry to his home, and acutely sensible as he was to their force, he could not, as a servant of the public, decline a task of importance thus flatteringly tendered to him at the spe-

cial instance of the president. He at once accepted it, and returned to his home, briefly to prepare for his departure, and to linger to the latest moment within the circle of its endearments.

It had been arranged that the *Constellation* frigate should bear his flag ; but, as it would require some time to prepare her for sea, and the government was anxious for the immediate commencement of his mission, the sloop *John Adams*, being ready, was ordered to receive him temporarily, and the *Constellation* was to follow with the least possible delay. Having allowed him to remain until the latest moment at Newport, Mr. Thompson informed him, on the tenth of May, that the *John Adams* was daily expected at Annapolis for his reception, and would be ready for sea by the time he could repair to Washington and receive the instructions of Mr. Adams, the secretary of state, and reach her. Tearing himself from the home which he was never to revisit, he proceeded to Washington. There he learned that it would be necessary to visit Angostura, more than three hundred miles up the Orinoco ; and, as the *John Adams* would be unable to pass the bar at the mouth of the river, over which there is only sixteen feet water, he wrote to the secretary, then at New-York, to suggest the expediency of accompanying the *John Adams* by a vessel of lighter draught. By return of mail, the schooner *Non-*

such was placed at his disposal for this service. Perry now received his instructions in full from Mr. Secretary Adams, setting forth, with the thorough acquaintance with the whole history of his times for which he is so distinguished, the friendly course which the United States had pursued towards the republics of South America, our doctrine with regard to blockades and the equipment of privateers, and giving ample instructions for the government of the commander in the various contingencies in which he might be placed.

While in Washington he passed much of his time in the congenial society of his true friend, Decatur, of whom he frequently speaks in his correspondence in terms of strong attachment and the most exalted admiration. Decatur afterward called to mind that Perry mentioned to him, at parting, the possibility of their not meeting again. He remarked that, from what he knew of his own constitution, and his inability to bear active remedies of any sort, he felt persuaded that, should he be attacked with yellow fever in the Orinoco, he could not recover.

On the fifth of June he arrived at Annapolis and visited the John Adams, on which occasion his broad pendant was hoisted under a salute of thirteen guns. He found the ship, as he remarks, in good order, under the command of Captain Alexander S. Wadsworth. He was, however,

compelled immediately to relinquish the services and society of this accomplished officer, who left the ship on the following day to take command of the *Constellation*, which he was to fit for sea and bring out to him, and then resume the command of his own ship. For first lieutenant he had, however, his stanch and devoted follower and affectionate friend, Lieutenant Daniel Turner, and Mr. C. O. Handy, his former secretary and attached friend, had been ordered to the ship as purser. He remarks, with evident satisfaction, in the note-book in which he set down with pen or pencil whatever occurred to him, whether a passage of a favourite author or some passing remark, that the officers were gentleman-like-looking young men, and the crew a tolerably good one.

While waiting at Annapolis for the arrival of the purser with money and stores, and for the *Nonsuch* to join company from Baltimore, Commodore Perry addressed a letter to his intimate friend and relative, Mr. B. Hazard, of Newport, from which the following is extracted, as interesting in itself, or illustrative of what has gone before :

“I must content myself with giving you a very brief letter, with some little account of myself. Without feeling at liberty to mention where I am going, or upon what service, I can assure you it is



perfectly satisfactory to me. The course which has been observed towards me by the different officers of government with whom I have had occasion to communicate has been extremely gratifying. My wishes have been, as far as possible, anticipated; and, whatever I have suggested, immediately assented to. I go out as commodore, and am to have several vessels under my orders.

“I wish you to direct Benjamin Mason to make out a copy of the papers relative to Elliott, and forward them to Decatur. He is truly and sincerely a friend of mine, and one who is able and willing to render me a service. He informs me Elliott was very industrious when in Washington last winter, besieging members of Congress, changing his lodgings frequently, and using other such arts. Upon some he made impressions unfavourable to me; others had sense enough to discover his intrigues. Decatur had a long conversation with the president, who was extremely desirous of adjusting the difference, and even asked whether his mediation could possibly effect it. Decatur assured him a reconciliation was wholly out of the question. The president has great objections to having the business brought before the public, and it is probable the charges will sleep on the desk of the secretary. It is very certain they all understand Elliott now. He was, I am told, very much alarmed at the prospect of a trial; com-

plained that I had waited until all his witnesses were dead; boasted of having challenged me several times; of having gained the battle; and told so many and contradictory stories, that he has effectually established his reputation for falsehood.\*

\* The reader is desired to compare the above account of the manner in which the copy of the charges against Captain Elliott came into Commodore Decatur's possession, and of Commodore Decatur's notorious opinions on the subject, as there stated, with the following, from page 220 of the *Life of Commodore Elliott*: "The charges, the two affidavits in support of them, and the letter of Commodore Perry to the secretary of the navy, were destined to another fate than being made the foundation of a court-martial upon Captain Elliott. They were received at the navy department in the absence of the secretary, and immediately transmitted to President Monroe, in whose hands they were seen by Commodore Decatur. The commodore, after deprecating any resort to a court-martial against Captain Elliott, which, as he well knew, would render no service to Commodore Perry, took the documents into his own custody, doubtless intending that they should not again see the light. The preface to the first pamphlet against Captain Elliott states that, 'when Commodore Perry was about to sail on the cruise which terminated his valuable life, he requested Commodore Decatur to take charge of the following documents, to keep Captain Elliott in check during his absence.' This is a fabrication of the publisher which refutes itself." The reader must judge where the fabrication lies; and also of the following attempt, on page 222 of the same work, to claim the suffrage of Commodore Decatur as adverse to Perry. "The commodore, much to the satisfaction of the president, took them into his own custody, deposited them in his *escrutoire*, where they remained till after his death, and where they would still be were he living; for he was very anxious for their suppression, was

“You see what an egotist I am; every word of these pages about myself. I nevertheless think frequently of my friends in Newport, and the many comforts I have left behind me. I look forward to my return already with impatience, and shall hasten that period as much as is in my power. Possibly I may have the pleasure of seeing you in December. Mention me kindly to all my friends of the club, particularly to Randolph, Ellery, and Gibbs.”

At Annapolis Perry was joined by Mr. B. Irvine, who had recently returned from Venezuela, to which he had been accredited as a confidential agent. From this highly intelligent gentleman, who met him by direction of the secretary of state, he received a great deal of useful information with regard to the political condition of Venezuela, and the character of the prominent personages in the government with whom he was likely to be brought into contact.

The purser having arrived on the night of the sixth with the specie, the *John Adams* weighed on the following morning, and stood down the bay as far as Poplar Island, where, the wind failing and the flood-tide coming in, she anchored.

not a little grieved on perceiving to what extremities Commodore Perry had proceeded, and said that the affair must end here, or he would be ruined, and the navy dishonoured.”

Being joined during the night by the *Nonsuch*, Lieutenant commanding Alexander Claxton, both vessels proceeded seaward on the eighth until off the entrance to James's River, when the *Nonsuch* was sent to Norfolk, with the purser and surgeon of the *John Adams*, to procure supplies, and the *John Adams* continued on to Lynnhaven Bay. Being detained by head winds and calms, the two vessels only got to sea on the eleventh of June, when the course was shaped for the passage between St. Thomas and Porto Rico. On the fifth of July they arrived off Barbadoes, when the commodore sent the *Nonsuch* in with Mr. Handy, to procure information with regard to the political condition of the Spanish Main, and to other subjects interesting to his movements. The *Nonsuch* returned on the following day with the required information, and abundant supplies of refreshments.

Lieutenant Claxton found Admiral Campbell commanding on the station at Barbadoes. After saluting his flag, he waited on him, when the admiral desired him to express his regret to the commodore that he should have been denied the opportunity of showing him all the civility which he wished, but hoped yet to have the pleasure of meeting him. From the admiral Mr. Claxton obtained some information the commodore was anxious for with regard to the hurricanes, of which

the season was at hand. Their approach is denoted by the wind hauling to the south and west, attended with dark weather. Great apprehension was entertained of them that particular season, by reason of the uncommon absence of thunder and lightning; and the first hurricane was daily expected. It was mentioned as a remarkable and important fact, that they were never known to blow beyond two degrees southward of Barbadoes. The admiral was about to proceed in that direction to avoid them. Mr. Handy learned on shore that the contending armies on the Spanish Main had gone into summer quarters: Murillo, the Spanish general, at Apures, and Bolivar in his immediate neighbourhood. The expedition fitting at Margarita against Cumana, from which great results had been expected in favour of the Patriot cause, had not yet got in motion. Mr. Handy was unable to procure a good chart of the Orinoco, which the commodore had been unable to obtain in the United States. He brought word, however, that the navigation of the Gulf of Paria was free from danger, and that Port Spain, in the island of Trinidad, where the commodore proposed leaving the John Adams, was a noble harbour.

Proceeding on their course, the two vessels arrived, on the fifteenth of July, at the entrance of the Orinoco, when the commodore shifted his flag to the Nonsuch, and ordered the John Adams to

Port Spain, distant about a hundred and fifty miles, to await his return. Having received a pilot outside the bar, the Nonsuch crossed and commenced the tedious ascent of the river, having more than three hundred miles to run against the current. For a considerable distance the immediate shores were uninhabited, owing to their extreme lowness, and the periodical rise of the river subjecting them to inundation. They were covered, however, with noble trees, the magnificent productions of tropical vegetation, to which the schooner, when the wind failed, was occasionally made fast with a light tow-line, and sheered with the helm to keep her clear of the shore. In ascending farther, occasional settlements occurred, and the vast forests were alternated by plantations, in which the rich soil and fertilizing sun amply repaid the toils of the cultivator. The scenery was everywhere grand and majestic, and often beautiful; but the excessive heat, the annoyance of the moschettoes, and the discomfort of so small a vessel, unfitted the commodore to enjoy it. Frequently, when the wind was light, he would get into his boat, and pull ahead of the schooner along the bank which she was following, amusing himself with his gun in bringing down the birds and other game which abounded in the overhanging trees. The nature of the shore, in many places, rendered landing impossible. In the following en-

try in a note-book, in which Perry recorded some of the circumstances attending his visit to Angostura, he forcibly describes the serious discomforts by which he was surrounded: "Confined on board a small vessel. Rise in the morning after being exhausted by heat. The sun, as soon as it shows itself, striking almost through one; moschettoes, sandflies, and gnats covering you. As the sun gets up, it becomes entirely calm, and its rays pour down a heat that is insufferable. The fever it creates, together with the irritation caused by the insects, produce a thirst which is insatiable; to quench which, we drink water at eighty-two degrees. About four o'clock, a rain squall, accompanied by a little wind, generally takes place. It might be supposed that this would cool the air; but not so. The steam which rises as soon as the sun comes out, makes the heat still more intolerable. At length night approaches; the wind leaves us. We go close in shore and anchor; myriads of moschettoes and gnats come off to the vessel, and compel us to sit over strong smokes created by burning oakum and tar, rather than endure their terrible stings. Wearied and exhausted, we go to bed to endure new torments. Shut up in the berth of a small cabin, if there is any air stirring, not a breath of it can reach us. The moschettoes, more persevering, follow us, and annoy us the whole night by their noise and bites, until, al-

most mad with the heat and pain, we rise to go through the same troubles the next day."

When about half way to Angostura they reached the village of Barancas, at that time the station of the Patriot flotilla operating on the river, consisting of four gunboats, the commander of which waited on the commodore as he passed. At length, on the evening of the twenty-sixth of July, the Nonsuch reached Angostura, and the commodore immediately despatched a lieutenant on shore to wait on the vice-president, Don Antonio Francisco Zea, the president, Bolivar, being then with the army, to announce his arrival, offer the customary salute, and ask when it would be convenient for the vice-president to see him. The vice-president expressed his satisfaction at the arrival at the Venezuelan capital of a public vessel of the United States bringing an officer of rank, promised that the salute should be returned gun for gun, and said that he would be happy to receive the commodore on the following morning at ten o'clock.

At nine the next day the Nonsuch saluted the Venezuelan flag, and her salute was duly returned. At ten the commodore landed, attended by several of his officers, and by Dr. Forsyth, an American gentleman resident in Angostura, formerly a surgeon in our army, and of whom Mr. Irvine had spoken to the commodore in the highest terms of



approbation, and who served as interpreter in all the commodore's intercourse with the vice-president. They proceeded at once to the Government House, where they were received in the Hall of Congress by the vice-president. After the customary compliments, the commodore, in fulfilment of his instructions from Mr. Adams, informed the vice-president that he appeared, by order of his government, in the character only of a naval commander ; that in that character he had been instructed to communicate with him, and would be glad to make known the object of his visit in the most informal manner.\* The vice-president replied that this mode would be extremely agreeable to him, and that he would be at any time ready to meet the commodore and be made acquainted with the object of his mission. The commodore then retired, and took up his residence with Dr. Forsyth, in compliance with his kind invitation. For the sequel of his visit we will now quote extensively from the note-book, in which he set down with pen or pencil the progress of his negotiation, and his occasional remarks on what was passing around him.

“The next day, being the twenty-eighth, I requested Mr. Forsyth to call on the vice-president,

\* Our government had not yet acknowledged the independence of Venezuela, which did not yet exist *de facto*, the possession of part of the territory being still in dispute between the Spanish and Venezuelian armies.

and know when I could be received for the purpose of opening my business. He replied that, to show his disposition to avoid ceremony, and his satisfaction at the mode I had adopted, he would call at my lodgings that evening, where we could have a free, friendly, and uninterrupted conversation, and avoid the curiosity of the people, who were much excited to learn the object of my mission. In the evening he called, as he had promised, when I explained to him fully the object of my visit to Venezuela; recapitulating, in the first place, the good offices which the United States had exerted to procure the recognition by Spain of the independence of her former colonies. While they had considered it their duty to observe a faithful and impartial neutrality, the part which they had taken, by negotiation with the European powers, had contributed more to promote the cause of South America than taking part against Spain would have done. Spain had solicited the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle to mediate between her and her colonies, they returning to their allegiance, and she granting to them certain commercial privileges heretofore withheld. The government of the United States was informed of this before the meeting of that Congress. It had been proposed that the United States should join in the mediation; but they refused to interfere in any plan of mediation except upon the basis of the

complete independence of the colonies. This occasioned dissatisfaction to France and Russia. Great Britain, aware that the mediation could not be effected without the concurrence of the United States, stipulated that there should be no resort to force against South America. France and Russia assented; but proposed, should the accommodation be rejected, to prohibit all commercial intercourse with them, to which Great Britain objected. The last expedient proposed was, that the Duke of Wellington, in behalf of the Congress, should arrange with the cabinet of Madrid; the duke insisting, in any event, that force should not be used. Spain wished the perfect restoration of her colonies; but, finding it could not be obtained, declined all interposition on other terms. While our government always took occasion to manifest its good wishes, it never lost sight of the duty of neutrality, considering the war a civil one: South America wishing to gain her independence, Spain to maintain her supremacy. For the United States to have recognised either while the war still continued, would have been to take part. Hence their motive for refusing to have communication with Mr. Clemente, claiming to be received as the representative of Venezuela, while the war continued and her independence was incomplete. I then furnished Mr. Zea with the two acts of our Congress with regard to neutrality and piracy, and

demanding indemnity for various spoliations, particularly the unjust seizure of American property by the schooner *Brutus*, commanded by Nicholas Joly, under the *Amelia Island* flag, which property had been condemned illegally, and sold within the territory of Venezuela. I also explained the views of the government with regard to privateers, and that commissions issued to them in blank were considered illegal. I asked also for an official list of those commissioned by Venezuela, that I might forward it to our government.

“The vice-president listened attentively, and appeared much gratified with the information I gave him with regard to the exertions of the United States, in behalf of South America, with the powers of Europe. His government knew that something unfavourable to South American liberty had been agitated by the allied powers, but of what nature they had hitherto been ignorant. Respecting Mr. Clemente, he said that the government of Venezuela was more displeased with him than the President of the United States could be; that his conduct was unauthorized, and a source of mortification to them; that the manner in which he had been treated was such as his improper conduct deserved; and that the note of Mr. Adams, stating the impossibility of having any communication with him, was couched in such delicate terms, that, even if there were any who

had a disposition to be offended at it, it was impossible for them to be so with justice; that a gentleman of talent and great prudence had been expressly selected to go to the United States, and he trusted would conduct himself in such a manner as to afford no cause of complaint. On the other points he stated his disposition to do justice to those who had suffered from the aggressions of cruisers in the service of Venezuela. He stated that Congress was then engaged on the subject of their cruisers, and that laws would be passed to place them under rigorous restrictions. As soon as possible, I should be furnished with a copy of the laws and a list of the cruisers. With regard to the acts of Congress, he said that it was the duty of every government to bring to punishment those engaged in acts of piracy; but that, although no explanation was necessary on this subject, he received it as an act of friendship and delicacy on the part of the United States. He concluded by saying that he had no doubt I should receive entire satisfaction upon all the points I had mentioned, and that we should have the mutual pleasure of doing away the little difficulties that had existed between the two countries, when the most friendly relations, he hoped, would ensue.

“On Sunday, the first of August, I called on the vice-president, and handed him the notes which I had addressed to him, and entered again into

explanations with him on the relations of the two governments. In this, as in the former interview, I received assurance of a prompt and favourable issue to my business. Yet, from the indolence of these people, I am not sanguine of an early termination of my visit; a visit which affords me no pleasure farther than a prospect of succeeding to the full extent of my wishes. The climate is bad, the town is extremely sickly. Already two Englishmen have been buried from the house in which I reside, and others are dying in different parts of the town daily. The officers and crew of the schooner begin to be sickly and anxious. For my own part, I meet this danger, as I do all others, simply because it is my duty; yet I must own there is something more appalling in the shape of death approaching in a fever than in the form of a cannon ball. The creoles are also dying daily. I have nothing to do but wait patiently the time of the vice-president, and occasionally urge him to expedite my papers."

In the course of the week he adds, "The vice-president assured me that, as it depended entirely on himself, an immediate and favourable answer would be given me; that indemnity for the vessels might be expected; and I should not be detained. Sickness taking place on board the schooner to an alarming degree, and a fever prevailing in the town of a malignant description, carrying off daily

both natives and foreigners, I requested Mr. Forsyth to suggest to the vice-president that it would be very agreeable to me to depart. He appointed the Sunday following for an interview, and said he would be ready to communicate his answers. I waited on him on Sunday. He said the papers were ready, with the exception of the answer in relation to one of the claims; that he would write me a note the next morning; and wished, if possible, that I would consent to stay until the last of the week. I said, if there was any public business that required me to do so, I should consider it a duty to remain. I afterward discovered from Mr. Forsyth that it was only to give me a dinner Monday I did not hear from the vice-president as he had promised; and the sickness of the crew increasing, the surgeon himself being attacked, and the time having already elapsed supposed by the secretary of state requisite to transact my business, I thought it advisable to write a note, signifying that I must depart.

“The communications I made to the vice-president appeared in the first instance to produce a favourable impression but at present he affects, as I am told, to think that the sole object of my visit is to reclaim the property that has been illegally captured. He joins others in the opinion that it will be policy to restore this property, as it will make a favourable impression on the minds

of foreign nations. Yet it is a hard matter to make them disgorge their plunder. These people affect to think that it is very unkind in the United States to demand restitution of any property, however piratically obtained, if it has been done in the name of patriotism. The patriotism of these people is like the religion of Cromwell and his followers, who murdered, robbed, and committed every enormity 'in the name of the Lord.' Some difficulty may be anticipated in regulating their privateers by suitable restrictions, as people engaged in this business are the only moneyed men, and, of course, possess great influence. They will not readily give up so fruitful a source of revenue as the privilege of plundering at pleasure the peaceful commerce of all nations.

"I find a great degree of hostility exists here towards my government and country, and, notwithstanding the frank and friendly communications I have made to this government, no steps have been taken to do it away. The English are the favourites. This I should not mind if there had not been attempts to cast reflections on my government on the part of the British, and practise on the ignorant to our disadvantage. Paragraphs from the English papers injurious to the character of the United States, and boldly accusing them of hostility to South America, and having sold their neutrality to the Spanish government,



are translated, printed in the paper under the direction of Doctor Rossio, the secretary of state, and pointed out to the people by the English merchants, who here, as elsewhere, consider the citizens of the United States as their natural rivals and enemies. Distrusting the warmth of my temper, I keep a strict guard upon myself; but I am really, at this moment, through their misrepresentations, looked upon almost as an enemy, merely because I have reclaimed property captured in the most illegal manner.

“The idea prevails generally among the people, and even among some men of intelligence, that the government of the United States is cold and indifferent to their fate; that it takes no interest in their struggle for independence. The ground of this belief is, that Britain having allowed men to be enlisted for them, and supplies furnished from its ports, while the Americans have furnished them with neither, they conclude that the English are much more favourable than the Americans to their cause. These feelings have been industriously fomented by the English who reside here. I have replied to this charge, that, having determined upon neutrality, whatever our feelings of partiality might be, we dealt fairly and honourably with both parties: truth and justice being the basis of all our acts, it would be inconsistent with our character to profess one thing and do another. Some

of the most sensible of the inhabitants begin, however, to entertain jealousies of the English. They are alarmed at the readiness with which they come over, and are apprehensive that their government has some sinister views in giving sanction to the enlistment of men. They are aware that an English colony exists on their southern boundary, and many a short distance to the eastward. They recollect how very desirous England has been heretofore to obtain a footing on the continent, and they do not think so well of her as to suppose she would scruple to secure some valuable possessions if a favourable opportunity offers. Jealousies and dissensions have already arisen, and it does not require any great foresight to believe that they will become very serious. The English in their service have to suffer every privation from want of clothing and wholesome food. However well I may wish this cause, I cannot desire to see my countrymen suffer the privations and hardships which the English in this service have done : making campaigns in this climate without tents or anything to secure them from the burning sun ; furnished regularly with neither pay nor clothing ; their only provisions miserable beef without salt, and occasionally a few plantains ; held in little estimation by the natives, who, when they first arrive, envy them their fine coats, and afterward despise them for their inability to endure the cli-

mate. Many of the officers have returned sick from the army, with a shirt that could only endure being washed by a syringe, and a pair of pantaloons, the legs of which had retired to an alarming elevation. The troops would all desert if there were any secure refuge for them to escape to, and the officers resign if pride did not deter them.

“Having only stepped upon the threshold of the country, it scarcely becomes me to give an opinion as to its state. What little I have seen has, however, impressed me most unfavourably. There is scarcely a school or seminary of any kind in the country, and the children are growing up in gross ignorance; books are almost unknown, and the people generally debauched and depraved; gaming is prevalent with all classes; and generals and privates, whites and negroes, may be seen at the public gambling-houses engaged at the same table; chastity is little regarded, and looked on almost as an imaginary virtue, existing only in the minds of the passionless; married women and those of abandoned character visit and converse on a friendly footing. Religion is in the lowest state of degradation; forms are not attended to, and even superstition has given place to disbelief in all Divine authority; liberty of the press is decreed, but nothing can be published without being submitted to the government.

What, however, would be the result, should those in power, depraved as they are, be cut off? Who is to supply their place? Spanish policy has aimed at the entire extinction of talent and information among the natives. The blacks are numerous, and aware of their strength; great alarm exists in the minds of the few intelligent as to their future conduct and obedience. Should Bolivar and a few others be taken off, there will be an end to everything like government, even of a military despotism, for there are none to supply their place; and the country must inevitably fall into the hands of brigands, who will, by their robberies and murders, desolate the land, and by their piracies at sea form a nuisance to the commerce of the world."

This picture of the country, as it presented itself to Perry in a moment of irritation, created by the spectacle of vices shocking to his nice sense of morality, and the delays and vexations of a diplomacy which his impatient temper little fitted him to brook, was, though discouraging, doubtless, mainly, a true one. Nothing could have been more disastrous than the condition of this part of South America immediately after its premature revolution, for the sufficient causes which he assigns. The popular forms of government which succeeded to the jealous and narrow-minded colo-

nial one must, however, be eventually productive of good. The education of the children of the wealthy and powerful in more enlightened lands, and, still more, the introduction of education at home, must eventually tend to the regeneration of those rich and fertile provinces, and prepare them, with the lapse of years, to be the seats of civilization, refinement, and a real liberty, of which, as yet, they have only the forms and name.

The note-book in which the remarks of Perry on the progress of his negotiation and his observations upon what was passing around him are found, contains other traces of his tastes, occupations, and the habits of his mind. These are brief sketches of the characters of the most considerable personages in Venezuela, founded on information obtained from conversation or the result of personal observation. Of Bolivar he says, "He is a man of education and considerable knowledge of the world, having travelled through Europe. He was possessed of a large fortune, which, combined with other qualifications, first gave him his ascendancy. He is fluent in conversation, speaks French, and understands English; is aristocratic in his views, believing the English constitution to be the best, and desirous of forming a government here on the same model; wishing to make an hereditary nobility among his general officers, who are represented as a set of profligates." General

Paez he describes as "a man without education, originally a peasant, but possessing a strong mind and great heroism of character, united to military talent."

There is also in this book a list of trees, valuable plants, and animals peculiar to the country. Various extracts, too, denote the course of his reading at this time; in the Bible, Cicero, Vatel, American State Papers, Sir William Temple, Humboldt, and Madame de Staël. Extracts of these are often accompanied with opinions of his own. They are chiefly such as convey noble and magnanimous sentiments, and inculcate the practice of virtue. The lofty morals and noble maxims of Vatel seem to have impressed him strongly. The following is one quotation which the writer's recollection leads him to believe from that admirable author, though his name is not affixed to it: "We may say of states what has long been acknowledged in regard to private persons, that there is no better and safer policy than that which is founded on virtue. Cicero went so far as to maintain that no one could administer the public affairs in a salutary manner if he did not attach himself to the most exact justice." The following, added in parenthesis, is apparently Perry's own: "Truth is the ethereal spirit; neither individuals nor nations can be great without it." He quotes again: "Those who have searched deeply into morality are convinced

that virtue is the only path that leads to true felicity ; so that its maxims contain nothing less than the art of living happily." "A man who, by great application, has enabled himself to become useful to his country, or he who has performed some signal service to the state, may justly complain if he is overlooked in order to advance useless men without merit." "No sooner is danger in sight, than courage finds its post ; and when men are overcome with fear, they are no longer envious." "Those who write down conversations or make minutes are dangerous people, and ought to be carefully guarded against." "Alexander was a prodigy of valour and fortune ; but whether his virtues or his faults were greatest is hard to decide." "Cæsar, who is commonly esteemed to have been the founder of the Roman empire, seems to have possessed, very eminently, all the qualities, both native and acquired, that enter into the composition of a hero ; but failed of the attribute of honour, because he overthrew the laws of his country, and raised his greatness by the conquest of his fellow-citizens more than of their enemies." Such were the thoughts and maxims that fixed themselves in the mind of Perry, and found favour there. The writer has, perhaps, lingered unduly over the contents of this note-book, which furnishes the last written reflection of Perry's tastes and character. He was willing to defer

until the latest moment the painful narration which must complete his task.

On Wednesday, the eleventh of August, Perry at length received from the Venezuelan secretary of state a reply to the note addressed by him to the vice-president, claiming indemnity for the vessels and property belonging to the citizens of the United States, illegally captured by the privateers and cruisers of the republic, and condemned within its territory. In this reply the principle of restitution was admitted, and promise was made of an early fulfilment of its obligation by the republic. The vice-president had previously pledged himself, on the behalf of the republic, that its cruisers and privateers would henceforth be restricted within narrower limits, and, by holding itself responsible for illegal captures, had contracted a motive of interest as well as duty to restrict them closely to the admitted rights of belligerents.

Having thus completed his business, the vice-president urged him so strongly to remain until the following Saturday, the fourteenth of August, to partake of a dinner given to him in the name of the government, that he did not think he could decline doing so in courtesy, or consistently with those objects of conciliation which had formed an important part of his errand. Meantime, he continued daily to visit the schooner, where Lieutenant Claxton, her commander, and Lieutenant W.



D. Salter, who, from motives of curiosity, had come on leave from the John Adams, were now ill of the fever. According to his usual custom, he personally visited the sick, cheering them with encouraging words, and watching over their comfort. The surgeon, Dr. M. Morgan, was also ill. He had, however, been previously very successful in the treatment of the disease, which had not assumed a very virulent character; out of twenty cases that had occurred on board, he had cured fifteen.

On Saturday, the commodore, with most of the officers of the schooner who were in health, dined with the vice-president, and were elegantly entertained. They were met by all the members of the government and the principal inhabitants. The commodore, having succeeded in the objects of his mission, and being about to proceed upon the ulterior duties intrusted to him in the River of Plate, forgot the temporary delays and vexatious distrust of this government by which he had been annoyed, and prepared to part with his entertainers with more kindly feelings. On the following day, being Sunday, the fifteenth of August, he assisted, by invitation, at the solemn proclamation of a new Constitution, which was celebrated amid religious ceremonies and the discharge of cannon.

After assisting at the ceremony of proclaiming the Constitution, Perry repaired on board the Non-

such, and, weighing anchor, she dropped rapidly down the river. He had been slightly indisposed on Sunday, but on the following morning he rose in good health and cheerful spirits, being animated by the rapid motion as the schooner glided swiftly down the current, passing the shores with their magnificent vegetation so quickly that the trees seemed to glide away from her like magic. In the morning of the seventeenth he had his gig manned and pulled ahead of the schooner, along the bank of the river, with his gun. In the evening the Nonsuch reached the bar at the mouth of the Orinoco, but the wind coming in strong from the southeast, rendered it difficult to cross it with safety during the night. She was therefore brought to anchor immediately on the bar.

During the night the wind freshened, bringing in considerable sea; and the schooner, which tended to the current, having her stern seaward, the spray occasionally broke over it, and, descending the companion-hatch of the trunk-cabin, wet the commodore as he lay in his berth without waking him. At about four o'clock in the morning he awoke with a ~~cold~~ chill. Doctor Forsyth had taken passage in the schooner, which was to proceed to the United States with despatches after falling in with the John Adams, and, being in the opposite berth to the commodore, was called by the latter to prescribe for him. At this time Doc-

tor Morgan, the able and accomplished surgeon of the vessel, was himself confined to his cot by fever. Doctor Forsyth advised him to cover himself warmly, and had some warm ptisan made, of which he drank freely. In about an hour his chill went off, leaving him with great pain in the head and back, a hot skin, and great soreness of all the muscles; all his symptoms were considered by Doctor Forsyth to forebode a very severe attack of the prevailing disease.

Doctor Forsyth, having seen many cases of the disease on shore, and having treated those of the schooner after the illness of Doctor Morgan, and who was considered by the latter peculiarly qualified for the management of the disease, was unremitting in his attentions to the commodore. He commenced the use of cathartics, which had been successful in other cases, but with some caution, the pulse being strong and active. Finding no relief from this treatment, he tried the lancet, but quickly discovered that the constitution of the commodore would not bear the loss of much blood. His case proving so different from the others which had occurred on board, in which the strength of the patients had sustained them well under the same treatment, was considered a presage of great danger.

On the third day of the commodore's illness, Doctor Morgan made an effort to reach the cabin, where he found his patient in a most unpromising

condition ; restless from extreme pain, breathing with difficulty, and drawing occasionally a deep and tremulous respiration. The use of cathartics was still continued, while every effort was made to support his strength by agreeable and nourishing drinks. To allay the distressing heat of the head, he was sponged frequently while it continued with vinegar and water, which revived him greatly. Every remedy suited to the varying symptoms which skill could suggest, was used in turn, but without any permanent change for the better. Several times his skin became cool, and a gentle respiration came on ; but in a few hours a new paroxysm of fever would destroy the hopes of his physicians.

Though apprehensive from the first that he would not survive the attack, he evinced a resolute determination not to allow this belief to affect his spirits, or influence unfavourably his chances of recovery. The miserable discomfort of his situation, in the small and confined cabin of the schooner, where ventilation was impossible, though rendered of the greatest importance by the excessive heat of the weather, made him very impatient to reach his ship, where he would be so much more at his ease ; but the wind continued light and unfavourable, and the progress of the schooner very slow. On the fourth day after his attack, the *Nonsuch* was still forty miles from Port Spain, when Lieu-

tenant Temple was despatched by the commander to state the condition of the commodore. At this time his strength was almost entirely gone, and all the efforts of his physicians were directed to sustain the powers of life and allay the pain under which he was suffering.

Throughout his illness he had undisturbed possession of all the faculties of his mind, conversing on his case and on any other subjects that occurred to him. In the language of Doctor Morgan, "His patience and fortitude never forsook him; his mind seemed entirely superior to the greatest agony of suffering that he felt. His sufferings were severe, but short; and whenever I requested him not to allow an unfavourable symptom to discourage or alarm him, he said, 'I feel no alarm at whatever may be the issue: the debt of mortality must be paid!' During the whole of his illness, he showed every characteristic that could be exhibited by a great man and a Christian." On another occasion, it being his birthday, when speaking of his probable decease, the commodore had remarked, his mind reverting, no doubt, to the rare felicity of his domestic relations, and to the tender ties which his death would sever, "Few persons have greater inducements to make them wish to live than I; but I am perfectly ready to go if it pleases the Almighty to take me; 'the debt of nature must be paid!'"

At noon of Monday, the twenty-third of August, the schooner was within six miles of her port. The commodore, though in good spirits, was in extremity ; a deep and distressing hiccough came on at frequent intervals, and his breathing had become hurried. He now requested Doctor Morgan to inform him if any fatal symptoms should occur, assuring him that he would not suffer the intelligence to influence unfavourably his farther chances of recovery. Soon after he was seized with vomiting, and the disease assumed its most fatal form. So soon as he was again at his ease, he requested Doctor Morgan to call Lieutenants Claxton and Salter into the cabin, and to return himself. When they were assembled, he stated to them that he was fully sensible that he could not survive many more of the painful paroxysms of his disease ; that he had always previously had a will with him, and, if he survived long enough, would get Mr. Handy to draw one ; but, in the contrary event, he declared in their presence, and wished it distinctly understood, that he bequeathed all his property, whether real or personal, together with the guardianship of his children, to his wife ; his effects and papers, including the instructions under which he was acting, he committed to the custody of Mr. Handy. When he had completed this task, he said that he had wished for

some time to do it, and now felt greatly relieved. He begged the gentlemen to retire.

Soon after, a boat arrived from the John Adams, with Lieutenant Turner, Doctor Osborne, her surgeon, in whom Perry had very great confidence, and Mr. C. O. Handy. Although his bad symptoms had returned, he was much gratified to learn that these friends had come to him. His sensibility was touched when he saw by his bedside Lieutenant Turner, that trusty companion in former perils, and sharer of his more brilliant fortunes. With an effort, he maintained his calmness and serenity, making many inquiries about the ship, the officers, and the crew. Soon after he asked that Mr. Handy might come to him. Mr. Turner bore the message; and as he came from the cabin he was affected beyond the power of concealment at the spectacle of his dying friend and commander.

The thermometer was ranging at this time at ninety. Mr. Handy found the heat and confined air of the cabin intolerable, it being necessary to exclude the light, which had become painful to the commodore, and with it such little air as could reach that worst of all dungeons, the trunk-cabin of a schooner. The commodore was lying on the cabin deck, where his mattress had been placed as a more airy situation than the berth at the side. He extended his hand towards his former secre-

tary, the faithful friend whom he had cherished and benefited, and upon whose heart he had made an impression which death could not efface. The commodore, slightly wandering at this moment, succeeded by an effort in looking Mr. Handy in the face, asked him how he had been, and remarked that they had all been very ill on board of the schooner. He added that he wished Mr. Handy to draw up a paper for him, but it would do to-morrow; and manifested a strong desire to reach the John Adams, and escape from the painful discomfort of his present situation.

Ineffectual efforts were now made by his able medical attendants to support the remaining powers of his life. But his strength failed rapidly, his skin grew cold and clammy, and became tinged with yellow; with his rapidly failing strength, the pain which he had hitherto suffered passed away, and at half past three o'clock he expired, without any convulsion. Thus, on his birthday, at the age of thirty-four years, died Oliver Hazard Perry, of a painful disease, surrounded by every discomfort, yet with a calmness and resignation honourable to his character and worthy of his renown.

The Nonsuch was within a mile of the John Adams when Perry died. This event soon became known on board of her by the lowering of his pendant. The deepest gloom existed among the officers and crews of both vessels, to whom he



had strongly endeared himself by his justice, his kindness, and his solicitude for their comfort and welfare during the brief period of his command. The greatest anxiety existed among the senior and other officers, that the remains of their beloved commander should be transported to his home for interment. The surgeons were of the opinion that it was advisable that the body should be buried at Port Spain, and the transfer take place at some future day, when the nation would not fail to reclaim the remains of one of its noblest sons.

Application was therefore made by Lieutenant Turner to Sir Ralph Woodford, the governor of Trinidad, for leave to land the body of Commodore Perry for interment. The necessary leave was courteously granted by the governor, with expressions of concern for the painful intelligence thus first communicated to him. At four o'clock on Tuesday, the twenty-fourth of August, the remains of Commodore Perry left the side of the *John Adams*, attended by the boats of the two vessels, containing their officers and one hundred and twenty of the seamen, in order to allow as many as possible of the crew to join in this last act of respect to a beloved commander. As the boats cleared the ship, pulling slowly, with measured strokes, in concert with each other, minute-guns commenced from her, and were continued until the procession reached the wharf, when they

were resumed by the battery at fort St. Andrew. The remains were received on landing by the Third West India Regiment, with arms reversed, the officers wearing white scarfs and hatbands; the regimental band followed in the procession, playing a mournful march, and then the commandant of the garrison and his staff. Officers of rank, on horseback, attended the hearse as bearers, while the officers of the John Adams and Nonsuch, a large concourse of the most respectable inhabitants, and the American sailors, followed as mourners, the procession being closed by Sir Ralph Woodford. The presence of the governor was a very uncommon token of respect; being the representative of the sovereign, it is not usual for him to attend funerals. As the procession moved through the streets, the balconies were crowded with ladies, who evinced deep sensibility as the solemn pageant passed them.

The funeral service having been impressively performed, the body was lowered into the grave and three volleys fired over it. The minute-guns now ceased from the fort, and, in the language of the local newspaper, giving an account of the funeral, "the whole body of attendants on the funeral retired from the burying-ground with every mark of sympathetic grief for the premature death of a gallant man, and a good parent and citizen."

The officers were at a loss to account at the time

for the extraordinary respect and sympathy, so congenial to their feelings, evinced by all classes of inhabitants. They were subsequently informed that some of the officers of the Forty-first Regiment were removed at the close of the war to the island of Trinidad, and the prisoners taken in the British squadron on Lake Erie and at the battle of the Thames were enthusiastic in their grateful expressions of the kindness of Commodore Perry, and their admiration of him as a commander and as a man. When it was known that he was to visit Port Spain by the arrival of the *John Adams* from the mouth of the Orinoco, the greatest desire was created to see him ; and when at length he came among them only to expire at the entrance of their port, all that they could do was, by respect to his remains, to express their deep sympathy. His character, as described by his enemies, “ brave, generous, humane,” had prepossessed every one in his favour ; and the story of his youth, of his manly beauty, of the tender attachment which had bound him to life as a husband and a father—a story soon told when death has closed the scene—tenderly affected the female spectators ; the busy sympathies of woman travelled beyond the intervening waste of waters, and shed tears of compassion for those who, unsuspecting of evil, were doubtless even then thinking of the absent one as in health, and looking with joyful hope to a reunion which should never be realized.

So strongly and gratefully, indeed, were the American officers affected by these marked evidences of sympathy on the part of strangers and former enemies, that they took occasion to express their thanks in a public manner in the following paragraph :

“ The officers of the United States’ vessels John Adams and Nonsuch, tender their grateful acknowledgments to the inhabitants of Port Spain for their kind and respectful attention to the funeral rites of their late commander, Commodore Perry. The disposition manifested by all classes was highly in unison with their feelings, and merits their warmest thanks.”

Lieutenants Claxton and Turner, on their own behalf and in the name of the officers of the squadron, returned thanks by letter to the governor of the island, and to the commander of the garrison and his officers, for their earnest and successful efforts to give to the funeral of their beloved commander a character of dignity and solemnity, honourable to his memory, and most congenial to their own feelings ; assuring them both that the circumstances would be highly appreciated by their countrymen, to whom they would be duly made known. Both gentlemen returned respectful and complimentary answers ; and Sir Ralph Woodford took occasion to express his lively “ regret, that the hopes which he had entertained of

receiving Commodore Perry within that government with the consideration due to his rank and merits had been so fatally disappointed.”

As the farther objects of the cruise, including the visit to Buenos Ayres, could no longer be prosecuted, the John Adams proceeded at once to the United States, under the command of Lieutenant Claxton, and Lieutenant Turner was transferred to the command of the Nonsuch. The manly heart of this faithful friend and follower of Perry through so many and such various scenes, was deeply affected in announcing to a mutual friend their mournful bereavement. He thus described the last moments of the commodore: “He preserved his heroic firmness and unyielding fortitude to the last, and was perfectly collected and resigned to his fate. I had only the melancholy satisfaction of being with him in his last moments, having repaired on board as soon as the schooner hove in sight. His sufferings from the violence of the disorder were great, but he sustained them with perfect patience, and continued in the possession and exercise of his mental faculties. I cannot give you farther particulars, but must reserve for some future occasion a detailed account. I am alike distracted with private feeling by the event, and by the severe pressure of public duties. My heart bleeds for Mrs. Perry, and I know the general distress which must prevail at his loss.

For myself, he was my best and dearest friend, and I cannot but weep over his fate.”

Mr. Turner rightly appreciated the feeling with which the announcement of Perry's death would be received in the United States. The one fault of his life had been redeemed and forgotten ; and his countrymen now only remembered his splendid services, and the lustre which he had shed upon the American name. The voice of sorrow spread over the whole republic ; and legislative enactments in various states proclaimed the magnitude of the national loss, and deep condolence with those to whom, as a private one, it had been so overpowering. Mr. Monroe, representing the sovereignty of the nation, and speaking in its name, took occasion to say, in his first succeeding annual message to Congress, that the death of Commodore Perry was regarded as a national calamity. The president sent messages of condolence to the bereaved family of the commodore. He directed the secretary of the navy to cause the expenses of his funeral, which had been unavoidably large, to be a charge upon the treasury department ; and, in due time, a national ship was despatched on the express errand of bringing the remains of Perry to Newport for interment, where, in the public burying-ground, a granite obelisk now marks his tomb. Congress, taking into consideration the extraordinary services rendered by Perry to his country,

solemnly adopted his family, took charge of its maintenance, and the country which he had so well served became the parent of his fatherless children. An annuity of four hundred dollars, commencing on the day of Perry's death, was settled on his widow, and one hundred and fifty dollars, until they should be of age, on each of his sons, for their education and maintenance. On his daughter, born a few days before the arrival of the news of his death, a similar annuity of one hundred and fifty dollars was settled, to continue until her marriage. The gift was a most liberal one ; and the motive which impelled Congress to so unusual a grant was no less honourable to that body than to the fame of Perry.

But if the death of Perry was regretted by his countrymen as a national calamity, how must it have been felt within the narrow circle of his home ? That home had quite recently gained a new endearment. The birth of a daughter had been a source of unusual delight to its mother, for the sake of that gratification which it was sure to convey to the absent father. The news had been despatched with all haste, and it had been discovered with delight that the letter containing it had reached the Constellation before her departure to join Perry's command. It might be left to the imagination of the reader to divine how these tidings were received ; but among the letters

placed in the writer's possession by the sister of Commodore Perry is the one first written by his widow to his mother. The chief interest that the public have in this letter is the aid which it affords in estimating the character of Perry by illustrating that of the partner of his bosom. A man may be as well judged by the character of the woman whom he has loved and won as by any other single circumstance. The insight, therefore, which this letter gives into the character of Perry, by exhibiting that of his wife, and the attachment which she bore him, is essential, in some measure, to its right appreciation. Besides, the domestic relations of Perry have been excluded from this work more than is usual or desirable in biography, Mrs. Perry having scrupled to furnish the writer with any extracts from the private correspondence of the commodore with a view to carrying on the course of the narrative. He cannot, therefore, believe that the publication of the following letter will meet with her approbation, though given with the authority of the person from whom it was received, with a view of more particularly illustrating the life and character of Perry.

“November 13th.

“With what words or in what way shall I address you, my dear mother, when I stand so much in need of comfort myself, and of that consolation



which God only can bestow, who has seen fit to blast my tenderest joys? When I look back to the happy anticipations with which we parted, all seems to me like a frightful dream, and that the being whom we both so fondly idolized must yet return to cherish and protect me. What I have since suffered my Maker only knows, for I have but a confused recollection of those awful hours when first I was told my beloved husband was no more. Speech seemed denied me, and for many bitter days my only wish was to see his grave and follow him. Even his children were no tie to me; and the birth of the dear little innocent, over whom I had so often rejoiced, was lamented in the bitterest terms. Thank God, the sharpness of those feelings is subdued; and though I daily weep for him, I can feel that there is mercy and blessings still left for me. My friends were devoted to me, and my uncle was like a father. But at such a moment sympathy and kindness avail but little; nature must have its vent, or the aching heart would break. Perry, sick and expiring, seems constantly before my eyes; but, in the midst of his distress, that he was able to be composed and resigned, affords the greatest consolation to us all. That none of those who were near and dear to him were permitted to sooth his last hours has almost broken my heart, and that my dear little daughter can never know a father's blessing or a

father's love has caused the keenest regrets ; but they are unavailing, and you must have felt and shared them with me. The ways of God are dark and intricate, but they are doubtless just ; my beloved husband has gone from me, but he has left a name to his country and children that is without a stain ; he was my guardian angel on earth, and will, I trust, continue one in Heaven. Time may soften the anguish I now feel, but can never efface from my heart his virtues, his kindness, and his affection towards me. My love and respect for his memory will always lead me to act as if he was present with me. To his children I shall devote my future days ; the world has now lost its greatest charm, and I look forward to a reunion that will be eternal and imperishable. On me has devolved a great and important charge, and my first prayer to Heaven was for strength and discretion so to manage them as to make his children useful and virtuous members of society.

“ Ah, my dear mother, how many bitter hours I have yet to suffer before I can think with composure on my loss. I am young in life to have had my dearest happiness so soon destroyed. My cup of felicity was perfect ; and from fifteen to the present hour, my heart never wavered from its first affections. My husband was all to me, and for him I could have left every friend on earth. He spoke of me to the last in the most endearing

terms ; his children, his mother, all his relations, had his dying blessing, and the last act of his life was that of love and confidence towards me. But I can write no more, for I have wept until my sight is almost gone, and my heart nearly broken. God bless you all : my kindest love to Anne and the family. In the midst of my sorrow I remembered them all, and feel anxious to hear of her safety. May her husband long be preserved to her, and comfort you for what you have lost. Write me when you are able, and believe me your affectionate daughter,

“E. C. PERRY.”

The promise self-made by Perry's youthful widow in the first moment of affliction, to devote her future days to his children, and to act as if he were ever present, has been most amply redeemed. All her days have been so devoted, and her maternal solicitude has received its appropriate blessing. As if in that one mysterious dispensation, to which she has learned to bow in submission, she had exhausted her cup of sorrow, no new calamity has since visited her. Not one of her children has been taken from her, and she has been spared the still greater hardship of unrequited care and affection ; of seeing them become other than an honour to the memory of their father, and a testimony of her watchful and judicious nurture and persevering

solicitude. The adopted children of the country, that country has a right to know that its bounty has not been wasted, and that all have been reared to virtue and usefulness. The eldest, Grant Champlin Perry, after pursuing his academic and collegiate course with unusual credit, is now a practising physician in his native town; the second, Oliver Hazard Perry, inheriting the profession with the name of his father, and with his profession and his name many of his characteristic virtues, after having passed his examination for a lieutenancy, head of a very large class of midshipmen, is now on service in the Exploring Expedition; the third son, Christopher Raymond, likewise devoted to the service of the country which adopted him, is a cadet of very distinguished standing at the Military Academy; the daughter, bearing her mother's name, and having been unceasingly her companion, cannot fail to be like her in all things. And thus the gratitude of the country, exhibited towards the children of a great national benefactor, is receiving new returns in the training of useful and honourable citizens and servants.

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It has been the effort of the writer, in the foregoing pages, to illustrate the life of Perry by a

minute and faithful description of his actions. Trusting that the impression of these will remain in the memory of the reader, he will not attempt to sum them up, but briefly recapitulate the distinguishing traits of his character. The scenes through which we have carried him render it almost unnecessary to say that Perry united immovable firmness to the highest and most chivalrous courage, and a calmness and self-possession which never forsook him. Danger, instead of disturbing the ordinary exercise of his faculties, seemed but to stimulate and develop them. Prompt to decide, immovable in his decisions, energetic in carrying them into effect—to these valuable qualities he added an untiring industry and enterprise which rose at the prospect of labour and difficulty. He did not rush impetuously at an undertaking, and afterward falter and become discouraged at the prospect of unexpected obstacles, but, commencing with calm earnestness, never paused short of complete fulfilment. He had the rare faculty of seeing things as they were, undisturbed by the mists of feeling, hopes, or prejudices. His mind was strong and well-poised; not imaginative, perhaps, or fanciful, but characterized by sound sense, enlightening an unbiased judgment which was rarely at fault. To this was added a correct taste, regulating his words and actions, and rendering them consistent and becoming.

A mind thus naturally vigorous and discriminating had been much enriched by extensive reading among choice and well-selected books, particularly in ancient history and the biography of the illustrious dead. For amusement, he turned with greatest pleasure to the older dramatists, and Shakspeare was his fast favourite. He was not only thoroughly familiar with the text of this author, which he studied with schoolboy earnestness, but had read all the most approved commentaries; he had, moreover, opinions of his own with regard to the various prominent characters of these dramas, which he is said, by one who knew him intimately, to have discussed in a masterly manner, unfolding their beauties with rare discrimination and taste. He had, indeed, on all subjects, a happy faculty of using and imparting the information he had obtained; and his judicious remarks were always enhanced by the absence of pedantry and pretension, and by his pervading modesty. He also wrote with great facility and correctness. His extreme aversion to the use of the pen probably led him to that conciseness and force which is conspicuous in his letters. He never dwelt over any composition, and not more than two draughts of important letters in his own hand are to be found among his papers. He had not the common affectation of the great, and often of the little great, of writing unintelligibly; his handwriting, like his

style, was rapid, easy, and elegant; a picture, in some sort, of the fairness and simplicity of his character.

Envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness found no resting-place in the heart of Perry. There was no room there for any but the noblest feelings and affections. He was not disturbed by petty irritability on trifling occasions, though his temper was violent, and easily roused by injustice towards others or himself. It was his pride, down to a certain period of his life, that he had his temper under perfect control, until a personal insult, from which his guarded and dignified manners had ever before protected him, by producing a fit of ungovernable passion, convinced him that his command of himself was less perfect than he had supposed. The active benevolence and overflowing humanity of Perry exhibited itself as often as sickness, misery, or misfortune presented itself for his commiseration. A few anecdotes of this striking characteristic of him have been recorded; of how many must he have carried the knowledge with him to his grave? for in acts like these, and his efforts in behalf of his friends, it was eminently his custom to do good by stealth.

Perry was discriminating in the choice of his friends, and warm and constant in his attachment to them; never permitting an opportunity to pass unimproved to do them kindness or to advance

their interests. He possessed eminently the faculty of creating strong affection for his person in those who were intimate with him. With regard to those who were accidentally associated with him, and for whom he had no previous or particular regard, he was rather disposed to discover their good qualities than to be censorious of their faults. He was unsuspicious in his temper, and gives himself the character of being credulous; the fault of a noble mind, conscious of no evil itself, and suspecting none in others. His magnanimity was conspicuous, and betrayed him into some indiscretions. He had a chivalrous sense of the courtesy that is due to woman, and the most enthusiastic admiration of the female character. He was remarkable for his aversion for all grovelling, vulgar, and sensual propensities, amounting to positive detestation.

As a naval commander, he was sensitively alive to the appearance, order, and efficiency of his vessel; everything connected with the management of the sails, and a skilful performance of every duty connected with the fighting department, received his zealous and unwearied attention. As an officer and as a seaman he was equally eminent. He had a thorough sympathy with all under his command, attended personally to the comfort of his crew, to solace the sick, preserve the health of those who were well, and watch, in



every way, over the welfare of all. He was a strict disciplinarian ; but always punished with reluctance, and only when unavoidable. With the officers, his extraordinary faculty of creating a lively attachment for his person spared him the necessity of frequent censure ; a disapproving glance of his eye had often more effect than the stern rebuke of others. The unwillingness of his officers to offend him was extreme. Among his correspondence there are many evidences of this peculiarity, in letters written after the commission of some trifling fault, evincing not so much an apprehension of his official disapprobation, as the loss of his favourable opinion and esteem. Every germe of merit was sure to be discovered and encouraged by him, and no opportunity ever lost of advancing those who performed their duty with cheerfulness and fidelity. His attention to the moral and intellectual training of his midshipmen was unceasing. No want of encouragement from the subjects of his solicitude, no reluctance to learn, no resistance to being taught, turned him back from the determined prosecution of this all-important but much-neglected duty. As an officer, Perry has been compared to Nelson ; and his battle was considered to have resembled, in the mode in which it was won, those of that distinguished hero. Instead, however, of being flattered at thus erecting Nelson into a standard of ex-

cellence by which to estimate the greatness of others, British writers have shown indignation at the comparison, and sneered at the idea of our "Nelsonic victory." Their haughty pride does not permit them to conceive that as noble a heart may beat beneath the plain blue coat of an American officer, as within the starred and ribanded breast of their titled hero. Perry was not less brave, not less chivalrous, not less patriotic than Nelson; equally humane to his own countrymen, more humane to his enemies; his single victory was more truly the fruit of his own heroism. In his moral character, how superior was Perry to Nelson: compare his unshaken fidelity for the chosen partner of his bosom with Nelson's abandonment of his; the single fault of Perry, his outrage of an officer who had insulted him, and to whom he instantly offered atonement, with the crime which Nelson perpetrated at the bidding of the woman to whom he had already sacrificed his vows made on the altar, and her happiness in whose behalf they had been offered.

The person of Perry was of the loftiest stature and most graceful mould. He was easy and measured in his movements, and calm in his air. His brow was full, massive, and lofty, his features regular and elegant, and his eye full, dark, and lustrous. His mouth was uncommonly handsome, and his teeth large, regular, and very white. The

prevailing expression of his countenance was mild, benignant, and cheerful, and a smile of amiability, irresistibly pleasing, played in conversation about his lips. His whole air was expressive of health, freshness, comfort, and contentment, bearing testimony to a life of temperance and moderation.

In his private character Perry was a model of every domestic virtue and grace ; an affectionate and devoted husband, a fond father, and a faithful and generous friend ; most happy in the domestic and social relations which he had formed for himself, and the centre and cause of happiness to those who surrounded him. Thoroughly domestic in his tastes, yet social in his feelings, hospitable without ostentation, and not averse to a measured and regulated conviviality in the midst of his family and friends ; eminently urbane and modest in demeanour, yet ever willing, as able, to take his fair share in the general entertainment. The amiability of Perry was one of his most distinguishing traits, and the susceptibility of his feelings was excessive. Such are some of the attributes of the character of Perry. A brief anecdote will show with what sentiments he impressed one of the noblest of Americans. When Decatur was first informed by Mr. Handy of the particulars of the death of Perry, he was sensibly affected ; after a short pause, he remarked, with great solemnity,

“ Sir ! the American Navy has lost its brightest ornament ! ”

These are doubtless the very words which Perry would have used with reference to his endeared and gallant friend, had he lived a little longer ; what each, forgetting himself, would in like circumstances have exclaimed of the other. They were, indeed, a pair of noble brothers, too soon, alas ! withdrawn from a profession which they honoured and adorned ; of whom, however, still remains to us a bright and enduring example of whatever, in a sea-officer, is truly admirable and worthy of imitation.

## A P P E N D I X.

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*Charges preferred by Captain Oliver H. Perry against Captain Jesse D. Elliott, of the United States' Navy.*

### FIRST CHARGE.

THAT the said Captain Elliott having, on the 10th of September, 1813, during the engagement on Lake Erie between the American and British fleets, before the eyes of the enemy, conducted himself in his command of the United States' brig Niagara in such a manner as to incur the reproaches of the American fleet, and of the American army, then stationed in the neighbourhood, under the command of Major-general Harrison, and of the citizens of the surrounding country ; and having, in this unfortunate situation, experienced from his commanding officer all the relief, and the most friendly countenance and support which (without absolute inconsistency with truth) it was in the power of that officer to afford him, was, as soon as left in the command of that lake, and after the departure of his said commanding officer, guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, by immediately entering upon and pursuing a series of intrigues, designed to repair his own reputation at the expense and sacrifice of his said commanding officer.

### *Specification first.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, on or about the month of November, 1813, procured a certificate from Lieutenant Smith, whom the said Elliott had attempted to dishonour by representing him as guilty of misconduct during said engagement ; which certificate was intended to reflect on the said Captain Perry ; insidiously to misrepresent his conduct during said engagement, and to impeach the truth of his official report thereof. And because, at or near the same time, the said Captain Elliott procured a certificate to be signed by Lieutenant Edwards, Purser Magrath, Doctor Barton, and Acting Sailing-master Webster, having the same import and design, and containing a perverted statement of the conduct and language of the said Captain Perry when he came on board of the Niagara during said battle, although the said Elliott well knew that nei-

ther of the said officers was then present ; that the said Edwards was on the forecastle, that the said Magrath was at the time absent from that vessel, and the said doctor and sailing-master were in the cockpit, or elsewhere below, and could neither of them have had any personal knowledge of the pretended facts stated, which they could only have taken from the representations of the said Captain Elliott himself ; which certificates, in such manner obtained, were, by the said Captain Elliott, without notifying the said Captain Perry, procured to be transmitted to the secretary of the navy, for the purpose of injuring the reputation of the said Captain Perry in the opinion of the government.

*Specification second.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, at Baltimore, in or about the month of January, 1815, in presence of Captain Charles Ridgely, of the United States' Navy, did falsely, and with malice, represent the conduct of his said commanding officer in said engagement on the 10th of September, 1813 ; insinuating that, when the said commanding officer came on board of the Niagara during the battle, he was in despair, and ready, to all appearance, to surrender the fleet ; but the said commanding officer, finding no reason to believe that he, the said Captain Elliott, would consent to such a measure, the fight was renewed, and he, the said Captain Elliott, cheered and reanimated his said commanding officer. And at Lake Erie, on or about the month of January, 1814, in the presence of Lieutenant Concklin, did make the same, or similar false imputations upon the conduct of his said commanding officer.

*Specification third.*

That he, the said Captain Elliott, during the months of October and November, 1813, repeatedly stated to Doctor Wallace, of Erie, and to others, that his said commanding officer had, under the influence of fear or despair, thrown overboard *his flag*, called the *motto-flag*, which had been prepared by Captain Perry to excite and encourage his men, containing the dying words of Lawrence, after whom his ship was named, " Don't give up the ship," and the said flag had been picked up by another officer ; which said assertions said Elliott knew to be false, and that said flag was still flying on board of the Lawrence when Captain Perry left that vessel, and was never lost or thrown overboard by any one.

*Specification fourth.*

That the said Elliott, about the month of September, 1813,

made or procured to be made and exhibited to some of the officers a false drawing or sketch of the battle of the 10th of September, 1813, in which drawing he placed himself, in the Niagara and in the Somers, in positions of danger and service he had never occupied during the engagement ; and represented other vessels, which had gallantly fought and distinguished themselves, in situations distant from the scene of action, and as rendering no service.

*Specification fifth.*

That, on or about the 22d of October, 1813, at Erie, he, the said Captain Elliott, in presence of General Harrison, asserted that he, the said Captain Elliott, was in close action during the whole of said engagement ; that the said Captain Perry had done him injustice in not so stating in his official report ; and that said Perry had promised, before said official report was despatched, to alter that part of it to which he, the said Elliott, objected, but had failed to do so ; all which representations he, the said Elliott, knew to be wholly without truth.

*Specification sixth.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, at Erie, in the months of November and December, 1813, and from that time until he left the station at Lake Erie, about the month of May, 1814, and also at Buffalo during the same period, and particularly in November and December, 1813, did, in a manner calculated to bring contempt and reproach upon his profession and upon the service, continually assail and beset the inhabitants of those towns and the vicinity (especially those most ignorant and easily imposed upon) with verbal accounts and descriptions of the engagement of the 10th September on Lake Erie, destitute of all truth, and calculated to reflect on the said Captain Perry ; and falsely to assume to himself a principal share in the victory obtained on said lake.

*Specification seventh.*

Because the said Elliott, at Lake Erie, on or about the 28th of October, 1813, did descend to various unmanly acts, in order to prevail upon Lieutenant Turner to give him such a certificate of good conduct, in the engagement of the 10th of September, as he knew could not be given with truth ; and, although Lieutenant Turner not only resisted his importunities, but showed a strong repugnance to giving him any certificate whatever, yet the said Captain Elliott pursued and urged him, and finally appealed to his feelings, by saying that the unfavourable reports of his conduct during the said battle had

come to the ears of his wife and rendered her unhappy ; and declaring upon his honour that, if Lieutenant Turner would give him a certificate, he would make no other use of it than as a means of allaying her uneasiness ; and, by such unworthy means, the said Captain Elliott succeeded in extorting from said Lieutenant Turner such a certificate as that gentleman hoped he might venture to give for such an occasion.

*Specification eighth.*

Because the said Elliott, in the months of October and November, 1813, resorted to unbecoming acts and persuasion in order to prevail on other officers, then under his command (particularly Sailing-masters Champlin, Brownell, and M'Donald), to give him certificates of good conduct in said engagement of 10th September, so contrary to their opinions that all, or most of them, refused to give any such certificate.

*Specification ninth.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, at Erie, on or about the 10th November, 1813, in a manner derogatory to the character of an American officer, questioned some of the British officers, then prisoners, of whom he had the charge (particularly Lieutenant Bignall), relative to his the said Captain Elliott's conduct in the late engagement, and for the purpose of obtaining from them a favourable declaration of his having been in close action in the Niagara during said engagement.

*Specification tenth.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, on the night of the 19th September, on Lake Erie (having first, in a previous interview, excited the compassion of his commanding officer by lamenting the injury his character had sustained, and declaring that he had lost the finest opportunity that ever man had of distinguishing himself), did address to the said officer a note, in the style of friendly solicitation, calculated to produce in his favour, from said officer, an expression of the friendly disposition and wish to relieve the said Captain Elliott manifested by that officer in said interview ; and did afterward, in the Erie Gazette of 1st November, 1813, cause a false copy of said note (of his) to be published, by which said note was made to assume a different tone and import ; and did also, at the same time, cause to be published in said Gazette the friendly letter or certificate of his said commanding officer as being a reply thereto.

All which practices, stated in the foregoing specifications, were resorted to by the said Captain Elliott, after his commanding officer had exerted his utmost personal influence



with the officers of the fleet and others, for the purpose of screening the said Captain Elliott from the consequences of his conduct during said engagement ; and had, in drawing his official report of that engagement, studiously laboured to devise some pardonable mode of representing that transaction, by which he might be able happily to get over the objectionable part of said Elliott's conduct on that day, and, at the same time, to name him with credit and honour.

*Specification eleventh.*

Because the said Captain Elliott did, on the 14th May, 1818, address to the said Captain Perry a letter, enclosing therein, as the cause of said letter, copies of certain certificates, stating expressions, alleged to have been made use of by Captain Perry towards the said Captain Elliott, without calling upon the said Captain Perry to avow, deny, or explain, or justify said expressions, descending to the most unmanly and vulgar abuse. In which said letter, also, the said Captain Perry is represented, wholly without truth, as having declared to Captain Elliott, at Erie, that, if he would not dwell on the action, he, the said Perry, would write a private letter to the honourable secretary of the navy, and express his surprise that the country did not give him, the said Captain Elliott, half the honour of the victory ; and, in the same letter, the said Elliott again misrepresented the style and import of his said note, mentioned in the last specification, giving it the tone of a *categorical demand* upon the said Captain Perry, to contradict the reports which were put in circulation prejudicial to the character of the said Captain Elliott, as if he, the said Captain Elliott, would insinuate that, at the time of writing of the said note, he considered said reports to have been put in circulation by the said Captain Perry, and that he accordingly called upon him, in said note, to contradict them.

CHARGE SECOND.

Conduct unbecoming an officer, and manifesting disregard of the honour of the American flag.

*Specification first.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, about the 1st of October, 1813, on board the gunboat *Scorpion*, commanded by Sailing-master Champlin, then on Lake St. Clair, in the presence of said Champlin, intemperately and unjustly abused the said Captain Perry, his said commanding officer on Lake Erie, and expressly declared that he had had it in his power to destroy the fleet, and the said Perry with it, and he only regretted that he

had not done so ; and farther there declared, that the officers and men of the Lawrence were not entitled to prize-money on account of the vessels of the enemy captured on Lake Erie, but that the officers and crews of the other vessels of the American fleet were entitled to prize-money for the recapture of the Lawrence. And because the said Captain Elliott did again, at Buffalo, in November and December, 1813, publicly express the same wish that he had sacrificed the American fleet on Lake Erie, together with the said Captain Perry, its commander.

*Specification second.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, at Erie, on or about the 26th October, 1813, declared, in the presence of Dr. Wallace of that place, that it would be a serious question between the two governments (meaning the American and British) whether Captain Perry was not to be considered as a prisoner of war.

*Specification third.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, in the month of November, 1813, at Erie and at Buffalo, asserted publicly that the American flag, for the first time since the declaration of war, had been disgraced on board the Lawrence (meaning that such disgrace had been incurred by that vessel in the engagement of the 10th September on Lake Erie).

*Specification fourth.*

Because the said Elliott, at Erie, in the months of October and November, 1813, declared, in the presence of Dr. Wallace of that place, and others, that the American fleet had gained no honour in the engagement of the 10th September on Lake Erie, and that, from the superiority of force, the British fleet might have been taken in fifteen minutes ; although he, the said Captain Elliott, well knew that the force of the enemy in that engagement was superior to that of the American fleet.

CHARGE THIRD.

That the said Captain Elliott was guilty of oppression towards certain officers and men under his command on Lake Erie.

*Specification first.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, on Lake Erie, on or about the month of January, 1814, put Lieutenant Concklin under arrest, without any other cause than that the said Lieutenant Concklin went out of said Captain Elliott's cabin, declaring to him that he would not remain there to hear such reflections

upon the character of Captain Perry as were then made by the said Captain Elliott, which reflections are stated in the second preceding specification, first charge.

*Specification second.*

Because the said Captain Elliott violently beat with a trumpet one of the men on board of the gunboat Somers for laughing when he perceived or supposed the said Captain Elliott to dodge a chainshot which happened to pass over that vessel, near to Captain Elliott, during the engagement of 10th September, 1813.

*Specification third.*

Because the said Captain Elliott, during the months of November and December, 1813, while left in command on Lake Erie, took every opportunity of manifesting an unjust hostility towards the surviving officers and men of the Lawrence, and particularly towards such officers of the fleet as had declined giving him certificates of good conduct; on all occasions selecting such officers and men for the most severe duties, and placing them in the most uncomfortable situations, in such manner as to excite the observation of the whole fleet.

CHARGE FOURTH.

That the said Captain Elliott, on the 10th ~~December~~, 1813, being then a master commander in the navy of the United States, and commanding the United States' brig Niagara, one of the American squadron on Lake Erie, did not use his utmost exertion to carry into execution the orders of his commanding officer to join in the battle on that day between the American and British fleets.

*Specification of the fourth charge.*

Because the American squadron having sailed, in search of the enemy, a few days previous, the following orders and instructions were issued by the commanding officer, viz., 1st. An order directing in what manner the line of battle should be formed: the several vessels to keep within half a cable's length of each other, and enjoining it upon the commanders to preserve their stations in the line, and in all cases to keep as near to the commanding officer's vessel (the Lawrence) as possible. 2d. An order of attack: in which order the Lawrence was designated to attack the enemy's new ship (afterward ascertained to have been named the Detroit), and the Niagara, commanded by the said Captain Elliott, designated to attack the enemy's ship "Queen Charlotte;" which orders were then communicated to all the commanders, including the said Cap-

tain Elliott, who, for that purpose, and to receive farther orders and instructions, were, by signal, called together by the said commanding officer, and all the said commanders, including the said Captain Elliott, were then, by the said commanding officer, expressly farther instructed, that "if, in the expected engagement, they laid their vessels close alongside of those of the enemy, they could not be out of their way." 3d. When coming into action, an order was passed, by trumpet, for the vessels astern to close up in the line; and, after the enemy had commenced firing, the signal was made by the said commanding officer for the fleet to come into action, each vessel against her opponent, as before designated; yet did he, the said Captain Elliott, notwithstanding said orders, and in violation thereof, keep his said brig, the Niagara, nearly a mile's distance astern of the Lawrence, and a still greater distance from the whole of the enemy's fleet, during more than two hours of the battle, although but a few moments before its commencement he was within hail of the Lawrence, and might with ease have followed that vessel into close action; instead of which he, the said Captain Elliott, failed to come into close action, and to engage the enemy's ship the Queen Charlotte, as he was bound to do by said order, and by the example of the commanding officer's vessel, and did remain, during the whole period before mentioned, at such a distance from the enemy as to render all the guns of the Niagara useless, except two long ones, which, consequently, were the only guns fired from that vessel during all the said time, and by which, at so great a distance, but little, if any, effect upon the enemy could be produced; of which misconduct and breach of orders the said Captain Elliott was guilty, without any necessity, cause, or excuse, his said vessel being in all respects, in size, force, equipment, and crew, and sailing, fully equal to the Lawrence and the ship he was ordered to engage; and, being also to the windward of the enemy, said vessel could not easily have been kept out of close action, unless the said Captain Elliott had, for that purpose, kept, as he did, her main-topsail aback and her jib brailed up; by doing which, and by keeping the wind instead of bearing down upon the enemy, he, the said Captain Elliott, finally carried his said vessel on the outside of the Lawrence and Caledonia, placing those vessels between him and the enemy, and was, when his said commanding officer went on board that vessel, keeping her on a course by the wind, which would, in a few minutes, have carried said vessel entirely out of the action; to prevent which, and in order to bring the said vessel into close action with the enemy, the said commanding officer was under the necessity of

heaving to and immediately wearing said vessel, and altering her course at least eight points.

## CHARGE FIFTH.

That the said Captain Elliott, on the 10th September, 1813, being then commander of the United States' brig Niagara, one of the American squadron on Lake Erie, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, did not, in the action on said lake on that day between the American and British fleets, do his utmost to take or destroy the vessel of the enemy which it was his duty to encounter.

*Specification.*

(Same as to charge fourth.)

## CHARGE SIXTH.

That the said Captain Elliott, in said engagement on Lake Erie, on the said 10th of September, through cowardice, negligence, or disaffection, did not do his utmost endeavour to afford relief to the United States' brig Lawrence.

*Specification.*

(Same as to charges 4th and 5th, with the following addition :)

In consequence of which conduct of the said Captain Elliott, the enemy's said ship, the Queen Charlotte, was enabled to unite her force with that of the Detroit against the Lawrence; instead of preventing which, or affording any assistance to said brig Lawrence, the said Captain Elliott left that vessel, her officers and crew (eighty-three of whom were killed or wounded), a sacrifice to the enemy, although his, the said Captain Elliott's, vessel remained perfectly uninjured, with not more than one or two of his men (if any) wounded while Captain Elliott continued on board of her.

O. H. PERRY.

August 8, 1818.

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*Copy of Lieutenant Turner's affidavit.* CONF. CALEDONIA

In the battle of the 10th September, 1813, on Lake Erie, between the American squadron commanded by Commodore Perry, and the British squadron under Commodore Barclay, the action began when the two squadrons were about a mile apart, by a firing commenced by the enemy; the signal having been made by Commodore Perry for our vessels to engage as they came up, each against the enemy's vessel, as designated in previous orders, which made the Queen Charlotte the antagonist

of the Niagara, commanded by Captain Elliott. It was understood by the American officers before the fight, that it was Captain Perry's intention to bring the enemy to close action as soon as possible. The Lawrence accordingly closed with the Detroit very soon. The Queen Charlotte made sail for the purpose of assisting the Detroit. The Niagara might have relieved the Lawrence from the Queen Charlotte's fire if she had made proper exertions to bring her to close action; but, by keeping her main-topsail aback and her jib brailed up, she kept at too great a distance from the enemy to do him any material injury, and sustained scarcely any herself until the commodore took command of her, who immediately bore up and passed through the enemy's line, firing both his broadsides with such tremendous effect as compelled him instantly to surrender.

It was the general opinion of the American officers, and expressed with much indignation, that Captain Elliott did not do his duty in the battle as a gallant and faithful officer; inasmuch as he did not bring his vessel, as soon as he might have done, into close action, which circumstance *only* made the result of the battle for a short time doubtful. Soon after the victory, Captain Elliott's conduct was spoken of, as well in General Harrison's army as in the fleet, with great disapprobation and censure. Captain Perry heard of it, and spoke to me of it one evening; said that he was sorry reports were in circulation so ruinous to Captain Elliott's reputation; wished they might be silenced, and desired me to go on shore to the camp, and do all that I could, with propriety, to counteract them; I did so, accordingly, the next morning. He said the American flag had gained much honour that day, and he wished all his companions in battle to share it with him. Several weeks after this, Captain Perry told me that Captain Elliott wished him to alter that part of his official report which stated that the Niagara did not, until a late period of the engagement, get into close action; and asked me whether I thought that part of his report incorrect, as it had been agreed to leave the question to be decided by two commissioned officers of the fleet (Lieutenant Edwards, who was present, and myself, being the officers selected). I answered, I thought that part of his official report was entirely correct, to which Lieutenant Edwards assented.

Some time after Captain Perry left the lake, and when the squadron was under Captain Elliott's command, he applied to me, and repeatedly urged me to give him a certificate respecting his conduct in the battle. He said that his only reason for wishing one was to have it in his power to calm his wife's uneasiness, who had heard that his conduct had been questioned;

and declared to me, upon his honour, that he would make no other use of it than as a means of relieving her unhappiness. Thus delicately and unpleasantly situated, I wrote such a certificate as I thought I might, for such an occasion, venture to give Captain Elliott.

DAN. TURNER.

Sworn to before

HOLMES WEAVER, *Just. Peace.*

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*Copy of Dr. Parsons's affidavit.*

In the action of the 10th September, 1813, on Lake Erie, I was stationed in the wardroom of the *Lawrence* to act as surgeon. I well recollect that the wounded, from the first of their coming down, complained that the *Niagara* (commanded by Captain Elliott) did not come up to her station and close with the *Queen Charlotte*, although he had been ordered by signal; and this complaint was frequently repeated by them till the *Lawrence* struck, and repeatedly by Lieutenants Brooks, Yarnall, and Claxton. It was at the same time observed that the *Caledonia* was in close action, while the *Niagara*, a faster sailer, was quite out of the reach of the enemy. After the action closed, the censures upon Captain Elliott's conduct were so general and severe, not only among the *Lawrence's* officers, but those of the small vessels, that, in writing to my friends the day following, I did not hesitate to say that Captain Elliott had disgraced himself in the action; and the same sentiment was expressed in the letters of every officer on board who was able to write. These letters were on the point of being sent, when Mr. Hambleton, who had just had a private interview with Commodore Perry, told us the commodore wished us to be silent on Captain Elliott's conduct; that, whatever might have been the appearances during the action, he was then unwilling, after its happy result, to destroy an officer of his rank; and that honour enough had been gained by the action to permit of its being shared by every one engaged in it.

This request of Commodore Perry was complied with as far as was practicable; one of Mr. Yarnall's letters, however, had slipped from his hands before this message was received, and was published.

The second day after the action I attended the wounded of the *Niagara* (the surgeon of that vessel having been sick), and out of twenty cases, not more than one or two said they were wounded while Captain Elliott was on board the ship. On board all the small vessels, which Captain Elliott brought up towards the close of the action, the number of killed and

wounded did not exceed two or three. The number of killed and wounded on board the *Lawrence*, before she struck, was eighty-three.

In conversation with two officers of the *Queen Charlotte* a short time after the action, I asked them why the *Queen* directed her fire wholly upon the *Lawrence* instead of the *Niagara*. He replied, "Because the *Niagara* was so far off we could not injure her."

From all these facts, and others, the officers of the *Lawrence* and of some of the other vessels felt exceedingly disappointed and displeased with the official report of Commodore Perry, on account of the honourable mention there made of Captain Elliott. We have, nevertheless, been willing to believe that the error proceeded from the best motives.

Midshipman Senat, who commanded one of the small vessels, has repeatedly told me that Captain Elliott had said, in his presence, in Buffalo, that he regretted he did not sacrifice the fleet when it was in his power, and Captain Perry with it.

USHER PARSONS.

Sworn to before me,

HOLMES WEAVER, *Just. Peace.*

*Copy of the affidavit of Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens, commanding U. S. sloop Trippe in the action of 10th September, 1813.*

When the American squadron had approached the enemy within about a mile, and the enemy had commenced firing the signal was made by Commodore Perry to "*engage as you come up, every one against his opponent, in the line as before designated*;" agreeably to this signal, the situation of the *Niagara* should have been abreast of the *Queen Charlotte*, and within half a cable's length. The *Lawrence* went gallantly into close action and her example was followed by the *Caledonia*, Lieutenant Turner; but the *Niagara* continued to hug the wind, and remained in the position she had taken at the commencement of the action till a few moments previous to Commodore Perry's boarding her. There could not be any rational object in the *Niagara's* keeping at long shot with the *Queen Charlotte*, as the amount and description of their force was equal, and, being principally carronades, no effect could be made by them at the distance Captain Elliott kept his ship. From the number of light sails the *Niagara* had, and there being a leading wind, Captain Elliott might at any period of the action have closed with the enemy, and relieved the *Lawrence* from the dreadful



and destructive fire kept up upon her from the united forces of the Detroit and Queen Charlotte.

It was the general opinion of the officers and men of the squadron, that Captain Elliott did not do his duty in the action of the 10th of September; and that, had he been impelled by a becoming bravery, he would have made greater exertions to have taken an active part in the fight. Great irritation was produced in the fleet in consequence of it, and this opinion continued to be freely expressed till it was made known that Commodore Perry was desirous of protecting Captain Elliott from the effects of such reports. Every exertion was made by Commodore Perry to screen Captain Elliott from the injurious impressions made by his conduct; but the volunteers in the fleet did not pay the same regard to Commodore Perry's wishes as was done by the officers; and many of them, having witnessed the conduct of Captain Elliott, gave full expression to their feelings and opinions respecting him.

It was a received opinion in the fleet, that, previous to Commodore Perry's going on board the Niagara, she had but one man wounded, and that her opponent, the Queen Charlotte, from the account of the British officers, had suffered but very slightly previous to being engaged in close action with Commodore Perry.

When the action closed, Captain Elliott was on board the Somers, and the accounts from that vessel were very unfavourable to Captain Elliott's bravery, as it was reported he beat the captain of the gun very severely with a speaking-trumpet for having laughed at his dodging a shot which passed over him from the enemy.

Signed,

THOS. HOLDUP STEVENS.

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WASHINGTON, January 29th, 1821.

Sir,—To bear testimony against the character of a brother officer is no pleasing task; but there is a paramount obligation that we all owe to our country, which cannot be overlooked but with the implication of personal honour, and to the supremacy of which all private friendship and personal respect must be compelled to bow.

Uninfluenced by other motives, I do now most willingly (but with regret for the occasion) offer my testimony with regard to the conduct of Captain Jesse D. Elliott, on the 10th day of September, 1813, during the action with the enemy's squadron on Lake Erie. I was the second lieutenant of the brig Lawrence, Commodore Perry's flag vessel, at the time and on the

occasion alluded to. I was the officer of the watch at the moment the enemy was first seen on that day, and reported them to Commodore Perry, when our squadron immediately got under weigh and worked out of the bay ; after we got out, the wind changed in our favour, and we run down to meet the enemy. After the commencement of the action, Captain Elliott, in the Niagara, instead of keeping on with us, and engaging his opponent as directed, put his helm down and sheered to windward of the Lawrence, leaving the Lawrence exposed to the fire of the enemy's two largest vessels. Some time after the Lawrence had been in close action, and much cut up, I said to Commodore Perry, "that brig (meaning the Niagara) will not help us ; see how he keeps off ; he will not come to close action." "I'll fetch him up," said Commodore Perry ; and immediately ordered his boat. As he left the Lawrence, he said, "If a victory is to be gained, I'll gain it." As soon as he got on board the Niagara, she bore up and run down, and in a short time was in close action between two of the enemy's largest vessels. I was on deck from daylight till after the battle was over ; and I believed at the time, and do still most solemnly believe, that Captain Jesse D. Elliott was influenced either by cowardice, and fear prevented him from closing with the enemy, or that he wished to sacrifice the Lawrence, and then claim the victory for himself.

It was my firm belief, at the time Commodore Perry was making out his report of the action, and I believe other officers were of the same opinion, that Commodore Perry endeavoured so to word it as to screen Captain Elliott as much as he could, and that this was done solely from feelings of benevolence.

Respectfully, &c.,

DULANY FORREST, U. S. N.

M. C. PERRY, U. S. N.

*Copy of the affidavit of Lieutenant Stephen Champlin, commanding U. S. schooner Scorpion, in the battle of the 10th September, 1813.*

In the action of the 10th of September, 1813, between the American squadron commanded by Commodore Perry, and the British under Commodore Barclay, on Lake Erie, when we were within the distance of a mile from the enemy, who had commenced firing the signal was made by Commodore Perry, "*engage as you come up, every one against his opponent, in the line before designated.*" The situation of the Niagara should have been abreast of the Queen Charlotte, and, of course, as

near as she could get, as, previous to the action, I had always understood from Commodore Perry that it was his intention to bring the enemy's fleet to close action in case of a conflict. The *Lawrence* went into close action in the most gallant style, followed by the *Caledonia* under the command of Lieutenant D. Turner, who kept her in her station, agreeably to signals. The *Queen Charlotte* made sail and closed up with the *Detroit* shortly after the action commenced, and directed her fire at the *Lawrence*. The *Niagara* still continued to remain a long way astern, and firing at long shot ; a short time before Commodore Perry's going on board of her, she ranged ahead of the *Lawrence* and to windward of her, bringing the commodore's ship between her and the enemy, when she might have passed to leeward and relieved the *Lawrence* from their destructive fire. The wind being at that time southeast, and the American squadron steering large (with the exception of the *Lawrence*, she being at that time entirely disabled, and lying like a log upon the water), the *Caledonia* took and maintained her station in the line, which was just astern of the commodore, during the whole of the action. It was the opinion of the officers and men of the squadron, that Captain Elliott did not do his duty in the action on that day, and that, had his conduct been that of a brave man, there is no possible reason that can be given why his vessel should not have been brought into close action with the British squadron before Commodore Perry went on board of her.

Great indignation was expressed by the officers in general at the base conduct of Captain Elliott, in neglecting to support the *Lawrence*, as he ought to have done. But, understanding that the commodore desired to screen him, they forbore to make any remarks publicly upon his conduct. The volunteers in the fleet, however, not being actuated by the same motives which induced those under Commodore Perry's command to remain silent, expressed their feelings without any reserve whatever. At the close of the action Captain Elliott was on board of the *Somers*, and behaved (as was reported by the officers and crew of that vessel) in a manner totally unbecoming an officer, by beating the captain of the gun severely with a speaking-trumpet for his laughing while he, Captain Elliott, dodged a shot.

On or about the 1st of October, 1813, while commanding the United States' schooner *Scorpion*, on Lake St. Clair, Captain Elliott came on board : in the course of conversation, the battle of Lake Erie being introduced, he observed "that the officers and men of the *Lawrence*, including Commodore Perry, were by no means entitled to prize-money ; and still farther, that the other officers and men of the squadron were even entitled to prize-money for her, she being a recaptured vessel." He also

observed, that in the action he was so far from the enemy that he only fired his 12 pounders during two hours and a half; the reason he assigned was, that he had no signal from the commodore to change his situation: complained much of Commodore Perry's injustice towards him, and said, "*He only regretted that he had not sacrificed the fleet when it was in his power to have done so, on that account.*" He also expressed sentiments to that effect frequently afterward at Buffalo, as I was informed by the citizens, and Midshipman Senat, who was present when the observations were made.

(Signed)

STEPHEN CHAMPLIN.

*Copy of an affidavit of Thomas Breese, Esq., purser of the United States' Navy, who was stationed on the quarter-deck of the Lawrence during the action of the 10th of September, 1813.*

On the 10th of September, 1813, the action on Lake Erie commenced by a firing from the enemy's flagship on the Lawrence at about the distance of a mile. *The signal was previously made by Commodore Perry for our vessels to engage as they came up, each against his opponent in the British line, designated by the order of battle*, which made the ship Queen Charlotte the antagonist of the Niagara, commanded by Captain Elliott; it being understood by the commanders of the American vessels that it was the intention of Commodore Perry to bring the enemy to close action as soon as possible. The Lawrence immediately closed with the Detroit, and her example was gallantly followed by the Caledonia, Lieutenant Turner, the Scorpion, and Ariel. Shortly after the commencement of the battle, the enemy's ship, Queen Charlotte, made sail and passed ahead of the opponent of the Caledonia, and opened a destructive fire on the Lawrence, in conjunction with the Detroit; but the Niagara, from some mysterious cause, remained in the position she held at the commencement of the action. The conduct of Captain Elliott, in thus keeping his vessel out of close action, was evidently the cause of the great length of time the action lasted, and made the result for a time doubtful. When the Niagara passed to windward of the Lawrence, she appeared to have sustained little or no injury. After the action closed, the censure on the behaviour of Captain Elliott was general and severe, not only by the officers of the Lawrence, but those of the small vessels; so much so, that the officers did not hesitate to say that Captain Elliott must have been actuated by cowardly or ambitious motives, until it was made known,

through Lieutenant Turner, that it was the wish of Commodore Perry to suppress any reports prejudicial to Captain Elliott. In conversation with some of the British officers some time after the action, I heard them give as a reason for the Queen Charlotte's changing her position and firing upon the Lawrence, was in consequence of the Niagara, Captain Elliott, being at so great a distance that the short guns of their vessels could not be used with effect. It was reported that Captain Elliott, at the close of the action, behaved in an unofficer-like manner on board the schooner Somers, by beating a captain of a gun with a trumpet for laughing as he dodged a shot which passed over him from the enemy. It was the received opinion in the fleet that the Niagara had but one or two men wounded on board of her when Commodore Perry took the command, and that she had sustained but slight injury previous to that time. I frequently heard, after Commodore Perry left the station, that Captain Elliott, then in command, had circulated reports, among the citizens as well as officers, respecting the conduct of Commodore Perry immediately after he got on board the Niagara, which were calculated to injure Commodore Perry, and were honourable to himself.

(Signed)

THOMAS BREESE.

*Copy of the affidavit of Captain Thomas Brownell, sailing-master of the United States' schooner Ariel, in the action of the 10th September, 1813.*

In the action on the 10th of September, 1813, between the American squadron commanded by Commodore Perry, and the British under Commodore Barclay, on Lake Erie, when we were about a mile distant from the enemy he commenced firing. The signal was made by Commodore Perry, "*Engage as you come up, each vessel against her opponent, as previously designated.*" The situation of the Niagara should have been abreast of the Queen Charlotte, and as near as she could get; as, previous to the action, I had always understood that it was Commodore Perry's intention to bring the enemy to close quarters as soon as possible in case of an action.

The Lawrence went gallantly into close action, but the Niagara continued to keep at a much greater distance astern than when the action commenced.

The Queen Charlotte made sail soon after the action began and closed with the Detroit, for the purpose of directing her fire at the Lawrence in conjunction with the Detroit. The Niagara, by backing her main-topsail and brailing up her jib, was not

enabled to fire but at long shots, and with her bow guns, for a long time during the action. A few minutes before Commodore Perry went on board the Niagara, she ranged ahead of the Lawrence and to windward of her, bringing the commodore's ship between her and the enemy, when it was in Captain Elliott's power to have passed to leeward and relieved the Lawrence from the destructive fire of the Detroit and Queen Charlotte, the wind being at that time southeast, and the American squadron steering large, with the exception of the Lawrence, she being at that time entirely disabled and unmanageable. It was the opinion of the officers and men of the squadron that Captain Elliott did not do his duty on the 10th of September, and that, had his conduct been that of a brave man, there is no possible reason that can be given why his vessel was not brought into close action with the British squadron long before Commodore Perry went on board of her, she being equal in point of sailing with the Lawrence. Great indignation was expressed by the officers in general at the base conduct of Captain Elliott in neglecting to support the Lawrence; but, understanding from Lieutenant Turner that Commodore Perry wished to screen Captain Elliott, we forbore to make any remarks publicly on his conduct. The volunteers, however, not being actuated by the same motives that induced those under the command of Commodore Perry to remain silent, expressed their feelings without any reserve whatever. At the close of the action Captain Elliott was on board of the schooner Somers, and behaved, as I am told by the officers of that vessel, in a manner altogether unbecoming an officer, by beating a captain of a gun severely with a speaking-trumpet for laughing when he (Captain Elliott) dodged a shot.

He also arrested the commanding officer of that vessel (Sailing-master Almy) for intoxication, and I have frequently been informed, by the officers and men of that vessel, that he was in a perfect state of sobriety, and did everything that a brave man could do to destroy the enemy. I was ordered to that vessel a few hours after the action, and found him perfectly sober, but his feelings much wounded by Captain Elliott's false report. I was told by Lieutenant Champlin and others, that Captain Elliott said he regretted he did not sacrifice the American fleet, and that it was decidedly in his power to have done so. Captain Elliott applied to me for a certificate of his conduct in that action: I told him I could not say anything in his favour, and that I stood ready at any time to give my sentiments before a court of investigation. After the action I was on board the *Caledonia*, when *Captain Bignall, of the British navy, remark-*

ed that, had Captain Elliott belonged to the *British navy*, he would have been hanged.

Mr. Magrath, who signed a letter prejudicial to the character of Captain Perry, told me he would sacrifice his right arm if he could withdraw his name from that paper.

(Signed)

THOMAS BROWNELL.

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*Copy of the affidavit of Lieutenant William V. Taylor, sailing-master of the United States' brig Lawrence, in the action of the 10th of September, 1813.*

I am requested to state such facts as came within my knowledge relating to the battle on Lake Erie on the 10th of September, 1813, at which time I was sailing-master on board the *Lawrence*. Our squadron was then lying in Put-in Bay, with some small islands, of which Snake Island was the chief, to the leeward. At daylight the enemy's squadron was discovered in the northwest from the masthead of the *Lawrence*, when Commodore Perry immediately ordered the signal made to get under weigh. After we had got under weigh, he asked me if I thought we should be able to work out to windward of the islands in time to gain the weather-gage of the enemy. I replied that I did not think we could, the wind then being at southwest, and light. The commodore then said he would wear ship, and go to leeward of the islands, as he was determined to bring the enemy to battle that day, even if he gave them the weather-gage. The wind, however, at this time hauled to the southward and eastward, and enabled us to clear the islands and keep the weather-gage. At 10 A.M., the enemy, despairing of gaining the wind, hove to in line, with their heads to the westward, at about three leagues distance; the wind then about southeast, and a light breeze. The signal to prepare for action was made from the *Lawrence* at a quarter before meridian. The enemy's flagship fired a single shot at the *Lawrence*. *Signal was made for each vessel to engage her opponent, as designated in previous orders*; which made the *Lawrence* opposed to the enemy's new ship *Detroit*, and the *Niagara* to the *Queen Charlotte*. *Commodore Perry then ordered the word passed by trumpet, through Captain Elliott, for the American squadron to close up, as before prescribed, which was at half a cable's length distance.* At meridian, finding the enemy within reach of our caronades, opened our fire, and continued nearing them until within cannister range, and were gallantly supported by the *Caledonia*, Lieutenant Turner, and by the *Ariel* and *Scorpion*, both on our weather-bow. Shortly after the action commenced, I ob-

served the Niagara to be a considerable distance astern, *with her main-topsail to the mast and her jib brailed up : and I am strongly impressed with the belief that her topgallant-sails were never set until Commodore Perry went on board of her*, after the Lawrence had been disabled. Once or twice during the engagement I asked Captain Perry if he observed the conduct of that ship, and the different conduct of the Caledonia. The enemy's ship, Queen Charlotte, taking advantage of the great distance at which the Niagara kept herself, closed with the Detroit, and opened her fire in concert with that ship upon the Lawrence, which proved so destructive, that, by half past one o'clock P.M., we were completely disabled, and our decks covered with killed and wounded ; but the animating exertions of Captain Perry kept alive the spirits of the small remnant of our crew, and the action was continued until only one gun could be fired, at which Captain Perry assisted himself. He then determined to quit the Lawrence and take command of the Niagara, which ship, he observed, did not appear to be much injured. The American flag, he said, should not be hauled down from over his head on that day. At the time of Captain Perry's leaving the Lawrence, the Niagara was passing our larboard beam, at from a quarter to half a mile's distance, leaving the Lawrence between that ship and the enemy ; the Caledonia at the same time passing our starboard beam, and between us and the enemy. I anxiously watched the course of our noble commander after he left the Lawrence for the Niagara. The enemy had discovered his design, and directed their fire at the boat he was in. He, however, remained standing up in her stern until the entreaties of the men prevailed upon him to sit down. I learned afterward that they had implored him with tears not to expose himself as a mark for the enemy's fire ; and finally declared that they would lay on their oars unless he sat down. It was a considerable time, with all the exertions of the boat's crew, before Captain Perry could come up with the Niagara. When he did get on board that ship, he immediately brought her into action ; and, passing through the enemy's squadron, poured into them a tremendous fire from both sides. In a few minutes the enemy's vessels surrendered to him and struck their colours, except two small vessels, which attempted to escape, but were pursued and captured.

I had assisted in the equipment of the Niagara as well as the Lawrence. The former ship was in all respects fully equal to the latter in size, in number, weight, and description of guns, in rigging and equipment, and in point of sailing. Before Captain Elliott arrived on Lake Erie, the Niagara was commanded by Lieutenant Turner, and the squadron had already been out



one cruise, manned chiefly with volunteer militia. Captain Elliott brought up with him from Ontario from 90 to 100 prime men, the chief part of which he took on board the Niagara, which ship was much better manned than the Lawrence, a great proportion of whose crew was on the sick-list, and most of the remainder not effective men, consisting chiefly of volunteer militia of all descriptions, and exhausted by previous exertions. I was on board the Niagara when Captain Elliott took command of her, and when that part of her crew which came from Ontario first came on board, and I observed that, as they came alongside in their boats, he called out from among them the men previously designated for the different posts and stations about the ship and tops; so that it appeared that his men were already selected. This occasioned my observing to Commodore Perry that the different vessels of the squadron were very unequally manned, in consequence of so great a proportion of the effective men being engrossed by the Niagara alone. He did not think proper, however, to make any alteration. All necessary orders previous to the engagement were distinctly given in writing, and put into the hands of each commander; and the last words of Commodore Perry, to all the officers assembled on the eve of the battle (as was related to me at the time), were, that he could not advise them better than in the words of Lord Nelson: "*If you lay your enemy alongside, you cannot be out of your place.*" After the firing had commenced on the part of the enemy, at about a mile's distance, Commodore Perry gave an order by trumpet for the vessels astern to close up in the line. *The Niagara was then near enough to the Lawrence to receive and pass this order.* I do not think she was, during the engagement, much nearer to the enemy than she then was, until brought into action by Commodore Perry. It was generally understood that one or two only of her men had then been wounded. If it had been the desire of the commander of the Niagara to have joined in the action, and engaged the Queen Charlotte, as ordered, I know of no cause which could have prevented his so doing. *The wind, though light, was favourable, and there was as much of it for the Niagara as for the Lawrence.* It was the general opinion of the officers after the battle, that, had the Niagara followed the example of the Lawrence, the enemy would have been compelled to surrender in a much shorter time, and with much less loss on our side. So much indignation was excited by the conduct of the Niagara, that even the seamen broke out in open murmurs: but Commodore Perry requested the officers to silence every complaint against Captain Elliott, saying that sufficient honour had been gained for all; and he was desirous

that the public attention might not be attracted to any differences in the fleet. His official account, when read at Erie gave much dissatisfaction to most of the officers. They thought Captain Elliott too honourably mentioned in it.

(Signed)

W. V. TAYLOR, Lieut. U. S. Navy.

The foregoing affidavits substantiate most of the charges preferred by Commodore Perry against Captain Elliott. His own evidence and that of other witnesses would necessarily have filled up any vacancies, as he would not have preferred any charge, or elucidated it with any specification, not susceptible of the most ample proof. With these charges still remaining against him, Commodore Elliott has committed other offences, which have led to his being quite recently found guilty by a court-martial of the following charges: of "oppression and cruelty, and conduct unbecoming an officer;" of "scandalous conduct, tending to the destruction of good morals;" of "inflicting punishment on privates beyond twelve lashes with a cat-of-nine-tails, in violation of the thirtieth article of the section of the act for the better government of the Navy of the United States." Among the specifications of these proved charges, the following being those of the charge of "scandalous conduct, tending to the destruction of good morals." may be offered as a specimen, to aid the reader, in connexion with the affidavits, in estimating the probability of the charges adduced by Commodore Perry, and rating at their proper value Captain Elliott's mad and vindictive denunciations of his magnanimous commander.

*Specification first.*

For that he, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command of the naval forces of the United States in the Mediterranean Sea, did, on or about the eighth of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, in the harbour of Lisbon, accept from a part of the crew of the United States' ship Constitution, then under his command, certain silver plate as a present, the whole or a part of the price of which plate was paid for out of the pay due or becoming due to the subscribers to said present from the United States.

*Specification second.*

For that the sum originally subscribed by a part of the crew of the said ship Constitution, to purchase a service of plate to be presented to the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, being sufficient only to purchase one piece, to wit, a tureen, leaving a small balance of less than fifteen dollars in favour of the crew, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did,

on or about the fifth day of January, in the year last aforesaid, at or near Lisbon, authorize Lieutenant William Boerum to purchase two tureens, he, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, agreeing to pay the difference between the sum subscribed by a part of the crew aforesaid and the price of the said two tureens ; and he, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, did afterward add to said purchase a pitcher and waiter, upon which said pieces of plate he did give the following inscription to be put : “ Presented, as a mark of respect, to Commodore J. D. Elliott, of the United States’ Navy, by the crew of the Constitution ; ” which said inscription was accordingly engraved upon the said two tureens, pitcher, and waiter, when, in truth and in fact, one only of the said pieces of plate had been actually presented by a part of the crew of the Constitution to him, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott.

*Specification third.*

For that he, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, on the eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, and on divers days and times afterward, cause the said four pieces of plate, with the said inscription thereon, to be exhibited in the cabin of the said ship Constitution, thereby holding out to those who saw them that they had all been presented to him, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, by the crew of the Constitution, when, in truth and in fact, one piece only of said plate had been presented to him, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, by a part of the crew of said ship.

*Specification fourth.*

For that he, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, on or about the ninth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, on board the said ship Constitution, and after the said pieces of plate were brought on board the said ship, send for Lieutenant Oscar Bullus, and state to him that the amount subscribed did not come up to the price of the plate purchased, and that he, Captain Elliott, had no doubt, if the crew knew what it was to cost, they would be willing to subscribe the full amount, and carry their intentions into effect, and did then and there propose to Lieutenant Bullus to make it known to the crew, for the purpose of getting the subscription under way ; which proposition Lieutenant Bullus respectfully declined, telling him, the said Captain Elliott, that he did not think it would look well in the first lieutenant to interfere in a transaction of that nature.

And that afterward, to wit, on or about the tenth day of the same month, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did employ his secretary, one Thomas Wells, to raise some more money from the crew of the said ship Constitution, in order to pay for the additional price of the plate, as before stated.

And that afterward, to wit, on or about the seventh day of the same month, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did inquire of the said Lieutenant Bullus how the subscription (meaning that which he had employed the said Thomas Wells to raise, as aforesaid) was coming on; Lieutenant Bullus said he would inquire of the master-at-arms, which he did; and afterward, to wit, on the twelfth or thirteenth day of the same month, or thereabout, the said master-at-arms brought to Lieutenant Bullus the said second subscription paper, containing nineteen names, and sixty-nine dollars subscribed, which said money was afterward received from the purser of the said ship Constitution, and applied to the payment of the bill for the said four pieces of plate, to wit, the two tureens, pitcher, and waiter.

*Specification fifth.*

For that he, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, for his own private benefit, and without regard to the interests of the service, on or about the thirteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, embark and cause to be embarked on board the United States' ship Constitution, then lying at Mahon, in the island of Minorca, twenty-two animals, consisting of jacks, jennies, horses, mares, and colts, being the property of the said Jesse D. Elliott, which said animals, together with another animal, belonging also to the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, which was taken on board the said ship Constitution at Gibraltar, on or about the twenty-fifth day of the same month, by the orders of the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, were placed in stalls erected on the gun-deck of the said ship, by the orders of the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, and so continued during the voyage of the said ship from Mahon until its arrival in Hampton Roads, on the thirty-first day of July, in the same year, by which scandalous acts and conduct of the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, and by the presence of these animals on board the said ship, and the erection and continuance of the said stalls for their accommodation, by the orders of the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, as aforesaid,

The comfort of the crew at their meals and at other periods was affected.

The usual messing and sleeping places of a part of the crew were interfered with.

Fourteen guns, seven on each side of the gun-deck, were so encumbered that they could only be run in and run out, and could have been fired only once, but could be neither trained, worked, nor exercised.

A large and important part of the battery of the said ship Constitution was encumbered, the force and efficiency of the ship materially impaired, and the said United States' ship Constitution rendered unequal to sustain the honour of the flag in an emergency, thus sacrificing the interests of the ship, the crew, and the service, to the private interests of him, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott.

*Specification sixth.*

For that he, the said Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, for his own private benefit, and without regard to the interests of the service, on divers days and times between the tenth day of March and the fifteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, employ several of the crew of the said ship Constitution, at the Lazaretto, in the island of Minorca, in taking care of certain horses and asses, the property of the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, and in cutting grass for the food of the said animals.

*Specification seventh.*

For that he, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, for his own private benefit, and without regard to the interests of the service, use and cause to be used boards, plank, and nails, canvass and junk, belonging to the United States, in making the stalls, slings, bags, and matting for the accommodation of the said animals, consisting of jacks, jennies, horses, mares, and colts, as aforesaid, so belonging to him, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott.

*Specification eighth.*

For that he, the said Captain Jesse D. Elliott, being in command as aforesaid, did, for his own private use and benefit, and without regard to the interests of the service, employ and cause to be employed nine men belonging to the crew of the said ship Constitution exclusively in taking care of the said animals while on board the said ship as aforesaid, the said men being excused from watch and quarters.

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The whole of the above specifications were fully proved, with the exception of that part of the eighth specification which states that nine men were excused from watch and quarters, it being proved that only eight were so excused.

We have seen in what manner, during the life of Commodore Perry, his character was assailed by Captain Elliott; the following letter of Commodore Decatur, written two days before his melancholy death, will show what measure of mercy was extended by Captain Elliott to Perry's memory.

Washington, March 20, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

I duly received your letter without date, with the papers therein referred to. The notice you propose taking of the circumstances which existed between Commodore Perry and Captain Elliot I think entirely correct, for reasons which you have assigned.

Captain Elliot has procured other certificates than those to which you refer, and he has shown such certificates, which strike directly at the character of Commodore Perry; certificates from common *seamen*, stating that Commodore Perry was entirely unmanned, and betrayed the strongest symptoms of personal cowardice when he joined the vessel which Captain Elliot commanded. Those certificates were shown to a friend of mine at Norfolk, who observed to Captain Elliot that he thought the exhibition of them calculated rather to injure himself than Commodore Perry. He will, no doubt, continue to exhibit them wherever he thinks he can to the injury of Commodore Perry, or the exaltation of his own character. Such certificates, in my opinion, can in no degree affect the high character left by Commodore Perry to his country and his friends; no unprejudiced man who *knew* him can believe them. I have repelled every insinuation to his prejudice, and shall continue to do so. It is, perhaps, due to his memory, it is due to the nation, that a full and faithful disclosure of all the facts in the case should be made.

I am, with great respect,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

STEPHEN DECATUR.

B. Hazard, Esq., Newport, R. I.

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It may, in conclusion, be stated, in justice to, and for the benefit of Commodore Elliott alone, that in his biography he has ceased to assail the courage and conduct of Commodore Perry; and that, while still claiming for himself the chief credit of the victory on Lake Erie, he causes Perry to be spoken of as "that departed hero."

Since the first publication of these volumes, the writer has received a letter from Commander W. V. Taylor, who has recently returned from service abroad, containing a number of interesting anecdotes relative to the events on Lake Erie. Not being able to introduce them in their proper places in the text, on account of the work being stereotyped, they are here annexed.

“The draught that I took up to Lake Ontario numbered about seventy, officers included. The men were the best body of sailors I ever saw ; no difficulty whatever occurred with them on the road ; neither was there an instance of drunkenness, except in the case of Tiffany the fifer. They all said they had volunteered to serve under Commodore Perry on Lake Erie, and expected to do so. When detained on Lake Ontario they appeared much affected, some of them even to tears. A few only of the above draught were placed under my charge for Lake Erie. They were principally such as had been named by Commodore Perry for petty officers, waiters, &c., and who, with the officers, scarcely amounted to twenty in number. A few other men from the Rhode Island draught were afterward received ; but altogether I should think we had not more than forty of them on Lake Erie.”

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“When Commodore Perry had made up his mind to leave the *Lawrence*, he directed me to have a boat manned. I told him that he had only one that would float, the one that had been towing astern during the action, and that she was badly injured by shot. I assisted in hauling her up alongside, and observed to him, when he was about getting into her, that he would have to keep her somewhat on one side to prevent her from filling. He replied, that if she would only take him alongside of the *Niagara*, it was all he wanted of her. He was asked by several of us to allow us to accompany him ; but he said, ‘No ; you must stay on board to take care of the vessel and the wounded.’”

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“There was a young man from Newport, named Wilson Mays, and rated carpenter’s mate. He was much reduced by the lake sickness, and was entirely unfit for duty ; but, while the crew were going to quarters, he came on deck. He was directed to go below as being too sick to render service ; but he remarked that the vessel was short of men, and that he could supply the place of a well man by sitting on the pumps, where he was stationed, and using the sounding-rod. The poor fellow was killed in that situation. Another young man, on having one arm dis-

abled, held up the other towards the enemy in a threatening manner, saying, 'Well ! never mind, we can lick you with one hand !'

"John Fox, the acting gunner of the *Lawrence* during the engagement, saw the candle from the lightroom fall on the floor of the filling-room among the loose powder, where it had been forced by a cannon-ball. He instantly caught the lighted wick between his fingers and fortunately extinguished it."

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The writer was not aware, when mentioning the re-enforcement which was furnished by General Harrison to Perry shortly before the battle on Lake Erie, that the soldiers were accompanied by three officers, who, at the head of their men, did good service during the action. They were Lieutenant Robert Anderson, of the twenty-eighth Infantry, who was stationed on board the *Ariel*, and second Lieutenants James Blair and John Henderson, of the same regiment, who were stationed on board the *Trippe*.

While adding the foregoing particulars, the writer has been placed in possession of the following narrative of the battle of Lake Erie, prepared for this work by the late gallant and amiable Commodore Thomas Holdup Stevens, very shortly before his sudden and deeply-lamented death. It is published in justice to the commanders of the small vessels astern of the line, whom, it will be remembered, Commodore Perry omitted to notice formally in his official report, in consequence of Captain Elliott having represented that they were not making their best efforts to get into action, and especially in justice to Commodore Stevens, who will long be remembered in the service as a noble specimen of the generous, free-hearted, and chivalrous officer.

"The morning of the 10th of September, 1813, found the American fleet, under the command of Commodore O. H. Perry, at anchor in Put-in-Bay. At daylight the signal was made from the flag vessel, the *Lawrence*, 'discovering an enemy's fleet ;' and, as soon as it was answered by the vessels of the squadron, 'under-weigh to get' was displayed from the *Lawrence*, and was obeyed with the greatest alacrity. The wind at this time was from the southwest, light and baffling, which prevented us from weathering the island in our way, and continued so until about 10 A.M., when it hauled to the southeast, which enabled us to clear the island. On standing out into the lake we discovered the English squadron, about eight miles to leeward, hove to in a 'line ahead.' All sail was now made by us to close with the enemy ; the square-rigged vessels carrying steering-sails, lower and aloft, and the others using their sweeps : the wind at this



time was light, but the lofty sails of the three brigs, and the better equipment of the Ariel and Scorpion, enabled them to fan away from the residue of the squadron, who were left some distance astern. The headmost vessels continued gradually to near the enemy until about fifteen minutes before meridian, when the Lawrence, being about a mile off the weather beam of the English commodore, a single shot was discharged from his ship, the Detroit, which was shortly followed by the discharge of his broadside, and then, in quick succession, by those of the whole of his squadron, as they could bring their broadsides to bear on the Lawrence. At this moment the motto-flag, 'Don't give up the Ship,' was hoisted at the fore, and the battle-signal was flung out at the main, 'engage as you come up, every one against his opponent, in the line as before designated.' This signal had been established a few days previous to the action, and designated particularly by name the vessels of our squadron which should attack the vessels of the English squadron, also named. A slight alteration was here made by Commodore Perry, the Ariel and Scorpion being directed to act on his weather bow instead of the place previously assigned them in the line. The leading vessels were then the Scorpion ahead, the Ariel just on the weather bow of the commodore, next the Lawrence, astern of her the Caledonia, and then the Niagara, all close together at this time, I should judge within hailing distance. The residue of the squadron, consisting of the 'Somers,' 'Tigress,' 'Porcupine,' and 'Trippe,' were some distance astern, probably a mile or more, all using their sweeps, and making every effort to get into their assigned positions. Shortly after meridian the 'Scorpion' opened her fire on the enemy, and was immediately supported by the Ariel; the Lawrence continued edging down towards the enemy, and, soon after, the action commenced between her, supported by these two vessels, and the English squadron. The Caledonia and Niagara, shortly after this, opened their fire on the enemy. About twenty minutes after the action commenced, the Caledonia put her helm up, ran down upon the English squadron, and when within good canister range, brought to abreast of her opponent, the Hunter, in the line, and opened a spirited and heavy fire. The gunboats astern had now got within long range, and began to fire, though still using their sweeps, and gradually closing towards that part of the rear of the English line where the Caledonia was engaged: about one o'clock they had approached near enough to the 'Caledonia' to make her the leading vessel of the leeward line of our squadron; the 'Trippe,' under my command, taking a position astern, the 'Tigress' on the starboard quarter, and the 'Somers' and 'Porcupine' on the larboard bow of the 'Trippe.' The ac-

tion now became very general and severe between the two squadrons. The *Lawrence*, lying about a beam off the English squadron, with the *Ariel* and *Scorpion* on her weather bow, was hotly engaged—almost the whole united force of the English appeared to be directed against this devoted vessel: the *Niagara* lay some distance to windward, firing her long twelve-pounders. The *Caledonia*, with the gunboats clustered around her, was, with them, keeping up a heavy and well-directed fire at the *Lady Provost*, *Hunter*, and *Little Belt*, and occasionally firing into the heavy ships. The battle continued to rage with great fury; the *Caledonia* and gunboats firing round-shot, which was evidently doing great destruction: the rapid fire of the *Caledonia* soon expended the greater portion of her cartridges, and three times during the action I supplied her with them. About two o'clock the firing on board the *Lawrence* began to slacken, the English keeping their fire up on her with great spirit, and our other vessels firing with equal resolution, till about half past two, when one universal shout from the English squadron gave us the intimation that the *Lawrence* had ceased to fire. At this moment a boat was seen pulling from the *Lawrence* towards the *Niagara*, which vessel was standing on to windward of the *Lawrence*: the *Niagara*, upon the boat reaching her, bore up (with the signal for close action at the main) under topsails, foresail, and foretop-gallant-sail; the main on the cap, to let the signal fly out; the wind had now freshened to a good working breeze, which rendered the sweeps useless, and the vessels of our squadron had all answered the signal. About this time, the English squadron, which had been hove to all the action, filled away, and I was so strongly impressed with the belief that they intended to tack and cut off the smaller vessels, that I hailed Conklin, and cautioned him to look out, and be prepared to haul by the wind. At this time I perceived a boat on my weather bow, and, supposing it was one from the *Caledonia* (which vessel I had already supplied three times with cartridges), I brought the *Trippe* to, when Captain Elliott came alongside to windward, and directed me to go within half pistol-shot of the enemy, and commence using grape and canister (we had previously to this been firing round-shot most effectively), and immediately pulled off. I instantly bore up, and drew up on the starboard beam of the *Caledonia*, between her and the enemy: Turner ordered me to get out of his way; I replied that I should not; he then hailed to say that if I did not he would fire through me; I replied, 'fire away!' which he did through his own foresail and my jib, carrying it almost all away. We ran close under the stern of the *Detroit*, the *Queen Charlotte* on our starboard quarter, within hailing distance, where we continued the action until I was hail-

ed by the commanding officer of the Queen Charlotte to say he had struck, and wished to know if we meant to sink him. I ceased firing, and hailed Champlin, who by this time had got close to me, to do so also, and to pass the word to the vessels astern : the firing of the Niagara, ahead of the English line, continued for a few minutes longer, and when it ceased and the smoke cleared away, we discovered the Lady Provost on our larboard beam : the Caledonia and the Trippe hauled out for her ; but soon perceiving by their gestures that they had surrendered, I left Turner to take possession, and pushed on with Champlin in pursuit of the Little Belt, which soon after surrendered. At this time the flags of the English squadron were all down, and the vessels of the two squadrons were speedily brought to an anchor."



# APPENDIX

## TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

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Soon after the original publication of the present work in 1840, Mr. J. Fennimore Cooper, author of the *Naval History of the United States*, took occasion to put the public on its guard against what he alleged to be the inaccuracy of that part of my work which related to the battle of Lake Erie, and to request a suspension of opinion until he could more fully exhibit this inaccuracy in a pamphlet which he proposed to publish.

After brooding during this long interval over the fancied injustice done to his *Naval History* by two other gentlemen who had unfavourably criticised a particular portion of his work, and by myself, and exercising his ingenuity, which is not inconsiderable, in endeavouring to disprove the allegations of partiality in his account of the battle of Lake Erie, which had been brought against him, Mr. Cooper has at length come forth with more than a hundred pages of special pleading, sophistry, and venomous abuse. With regard to my own share of Mr. Cooper's vituperation, I should abstain from replying to it, if I did not apprehend that my silence might be received as an acquiescence in Mr. Cooper's extraordinary views of the battle of Lake Erie, or an admission that his arguments carried any force with them.

It does, indeed, seem like an insult to common sense, as well as an imputation against the uprightness of public opinion, to multiply words in proving that the *Niagara*, commanded by Captain Elliott, did not do her duty in the battle of Lake Erie, when the world is in possession of the undeniable facts that the *Lawrence* and *Niagara* were vessels of

equal force and speed ; that each had a designated antagonist in the British squadron ; that they were within hail of each other when the action commenced ; that the Lawrence immediately bore down, ordering the other vessels to follow her, and engaged at close quarters, where she was assailed by her own antagonist and that of the Niagara, and reduced to a wreck, suffering a carnage unparalleled in the annals of naval warfare, while the Niagara remained at long shot, firing only her two long guns, during two hours and a half, and received very little injury, until Perry abandoned his own disabled vessel, went on board of the Niagara, and carried her into close action. But the subtle and ingenious sophistry of Mr. Cooper has so obscured the subject, and his presumptuous interpretation of the rules of naval tactics has thrown so many stumbling-blocks in the way of landsmen, that it becomes expedient to clear away his artful mystification, and expose the facts in their naked and true character to the eyes of those, if any, whom he may have succeeded in bewildering.

I alleged, both in the article in the North American Review, in 1839, to which a portion of Mr. Cooper's pamphlet refers, and in the Life of Perry, that Mr. Cooper had disparaged the victory of Lake Erie generally, and the extraordinary heroism of Perry in achieving it, while, on the contrary, he had exaggerated the services and suppressed the delinquency of Captain Elliott. Any American who has read *the Naval History*, as Mr. Cooper calls it, must have observed how studiously all the operations on Lake Erie are kept down ; how small an affair the victory is reduced to, and how inconsiderable, comparatively with the general conception of the navy and the whole country, the agency of Perry in achieving it is made to appear. Nor can he fail to have noted the anxiety to bring more conspicuously forward in comparison the victory on Lake Champlain, glorious enough in itself without the attempt unduly to exalt it ; greater prominence is even attempted to be given to the under-siv-

operations on Lake Ontario. Little is said by Mr. Cooper of the extraordinary efforts of Perry in preparing his squadron on Lake Erie ; of the indomitable heroism with which he fought the Lawrence ; of the matchless display of resources in difficulty by which, when the Lawrence, abandoned by her consort the Niagara, was reduced to a wreck incapable of farther resistance, he retrieved the day, by removing, in the height of the action, to the Niagara, and bearing down with her into the midst of the enemy's squadron.

This act of Perry's had attracted, in a peculiar manner, the popular admiration. In admiring the act, the people, wiser than Mr. Cooper supposes them, took into consideration the whole scene, with all its attendant circumstances : the Lawrence overpowered and wrecked after Perry had accomplished his whole duty as her commander ; the victory to all appearance lost, and yet Perry, surrounded by the wreck of his ship and the almost universal carnage of his comrades, still believing in the possibility of victory, and, strong in this belief, removing under the guns of the opposing squadron to the Niagara, and bringing her down, fresh and uninjured, into the midst of his enemies, to realize the victory he had heroically determined to win. Popular opinion could appreciate and admire this, though sneered at by Mr. Cooper in the following artful note, so well framed to disparage Perry and magnify Elliott. " Popular opinion, which is too apt to confound distinctions in such matters, usually attaches the idea of more gallantry to the mere act of passing in a boat from one vessel to another during the action, than in fighting on a vessel's deck. This was the least of Perry's merits. Captain Elliott was much longer in the same boat, and passed nearly through the whole line twice."

To Mr. Cooper, this act of Perry in leaving the Lawrence after she had been reduced to a wreck under his feet, in order to renew the action in the Niagara, still fresh and with-

out material injury, after the battle had lasted two hours and a half, seems but a small affair. One might suppose that this shifting a commander-in-chief's flag, in order to continue an engagement, was a very common occurrence in naval war. Let us inquire how common. Going back to the time of the Duke of York, afterward James II., who is said to have introduced naval signals and the system of naval engagements in the line of battle, we find it related by Paul Hoste, that the duke, in 1672, when in command of the allied English and French fleets, during an engagement with the Dutch fleet under De Ruyter, twice shifted his flag to continue the engagement, one of his ships having been destroyed by a fire-ship, the other disabled by the loss of her main-topmast. So, in the series of battles of four days' duration which took place between the English fleet under the celebrated Monk, duke of Albemarle, and Prince Rupert, and the Dutch under De Ruyter and the younger Van Tromp, we find De Ruyter three times shifting his flag from burning or disabled ships to continue the action in fresh ones. And on another occasion, Sir Edward Sprague and Van Tromp being opposed to each other, both abandoned their disabled ships to continue the engagement in others; and Sir Edward Sprague, having had his second ship disabled by the loss of her main-mast, was on his way in his barge to a third ship, when, the boat being struck by a cannon ball, he gloriously terminated his career in the performance of duty. In Boscawen's battle with the French, under De la Clue, in 1759, Boscawen, having lost his mizen-mast and fore and main topsail yards, after half an hour's engagement with the French admiral's ship, he shifted his flag to a fresh ship, and engaged and captured another ship of the enemy. In allusion to this subject of a commander-in-chief's shifting his flag from a disabled to a fresh ship, to continue an engagement, which Admiral Ekins justly considers a "noble proof of heroism," and commends accordingly, he says, "We have but one instance, since the



time of Boscawen, of a commanding officer's shifting his flag to continue the engagement—that of Commodore Nelson, on the 14th of February ; but several for the accomplishment of a particular purpose.” In Sir John Jervis's battle, on the 14th of February, 1797, Nelson, observing the Spanish van in the act of bearing up to join a division of their fleet, which had been separated from the body of it, wore his ship, the Captain, instead of obeying the admiral's signal to tack, by which means he found himself almost immediately engaged, at close quarters, with several of the heaviest of the Spanish ships, and after his ship had become disabled, he ordered her laid aboard the ships of the enemy, which were foul of each other, and carried them by boarding. Not satisfied with what he had thus accomplished, he left the Captain with her prizes, and, repairing on board the *Minerva* frigate, directed her captain to take him to the first ship which he could reach that was closely engaged with the enemy. But, before he could accomplish this noble intention of shifting his flag and continuing the engagement, the signal was made from the admiral to discontinue it, and Nelson repaired on board the admiral's ship, the *Victory*, and was cordially received. It appears, then, that while one British admiral, at least—Admiral Knowles, in his battle with a Spanish squadron, under Admiral Reggio, in 1748—has been censured for failing to shift his flag when his ship had been disabled and beaten out of the line, there has been but a solitary instance in the British navy since Boscawen, of a flag officer removing from a disabled ship in order to continue the action ; and that, in this instance, it occurred in the case of Nelson, and, on account of the discontinuance of the action, was attended with no results. Yet this achievement, but once attempted in the British navy during near a century of almost perpetual war, having been carried triumphantly into effect by Perry, under circumstances as critical as ever occurred in battle, and having resulted in a victory which, but for that inspiration of hero-

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ism, would have been the enemy's instead of ours, awakens no admiration in the breast of Mr. Cooper ; of that individual whose peculiar notions of chivalry, when himself an officer in the American navy, indicated the near approach of war with England as a fit season for abandoning the service of his country.

It is perfectly well known to the navy and to the country, that the Niagara, within hail of the Lawrence when the action commenced, and in every respect similar to the Lawrence in equipment and speed, did not make sail with her, and accompany her down towards the enemy's line : instead of making all sail as the Lawrence did, she brought by the wind under topsails, brailing up her jib and laying her main-topsail to the mast, sheering to windward of the Lawrence and Caledonia, so as to place them partially between her and her antagonist. By Captain Elliott's own admission to Mr., now Commander Champlin, on Lake St. Clair, soon after the battle on Lake Erie, added to the testimony of many witnesses, it is known that the Niagara was not near enough to the enemy, during the first two and a half hours of the action, to fire anything but her long twelve-pounders. This undeniable fact receives the best possible confirmation that the case affords from the official report of Captain Barclay, dated only the second day after the battle. "The other brig of the enemy, apparently destined to engage the Queen Charlotte, supported in like manner by two schooners, kept so far to windward as to render the Queen Charlotte's twenty-four-pounder carronades useless." Yet nothing is said in Mr. Cooper's account of the battle in his Naval History of the Niagara's main-topsail being aback, nothing of her failing to run down in company with the Lawrence, and engage her designated antagonist, the Queen Charlotte, as quickly and as closely as the Lawrence had engaged hers, the Detroit. He intimates, indeed, that the two brigs had only been able to get into close action together quite near the close of the battle, when he says, "the lightness of the

wind preventing either of the two largest of the American vessels from profiting by their peculiar mode of efficiency until quite near the close of the engagement." Yet some time before, in describing the early part of the action, he says, "the American brig—the Lawrence—endeavoured to close, and did succeed in getting within reach of cannon." It will require the boasted logic of Mr. Cooper to reconcile this contradiction, though no doubt he will succeed in doing it to his own satisfaction.

In a note to the *Life of Perry*, I had said, "Another gross delusion, practised by the historian and endorsed by the reviewer,\* who claims for it Mr. Cooper's sanction, because he has not contradicted it, is in assigning to our squadron a great superiority of metal, because the weight of shot thrown by our ships at a broadside was greatly superior to theirs. This superiority grew out of the fact of their having no fewer than thirty-five long guns, while we had only fifteen. Now, the weight of long guns is to carronades of equal calibre more than in the proportion of three to one. How, then, could they hope to exceed us as thirty-five to fifteen in the number of long guns, and yet equal us in weight of shot at a broadside?"

In meeting this passing objection of mine to his *Naval History*, Mr. Cooper takes occasion, in his pamphlet, to remark: "It suited Captain Mackenzie to parade the fifty-four to the sixty-three, but it did not suit me. In order to prove that my forbearance was more just than his boasting of the apparent disparity, I now give the official account of the metal of both parties." Mr. Cooper then gives the English official account of the relative forces, showing that our fifty-four guns, chiefly carronades, threw fourteen hundred and eighty pounds of shot at a double broadside, while the sixty-three of the English only threw eight hundred and fifty-one pounds. He leaves the impression that Perry had by so much the superiority. He makes no allusion, in sum-

\* *James's Naval History*, and *Edinburgh Review*.

ming up, to the important facts that the greater part of the English guns were long guns, while the greater part of ours were carronades, and that batteries are estimated by their weight of metal, and not by the weight of shot thrown or calibre. Thus, supposing two vessels, equal in other respects, to have been armed during the last war, one with ten long nines, throwing ninety pounds of shot at a broadside, and the other with ten thirty-two-pounder carronades, throwing three hundred and twenty pounds of shot at a broadside, the vessel thus armed with the long guns, though throwing less than a third of the weight of the shot of the one armed with carronades, would have exceeded her in weight of metal as twenty-five to seventeen, and, under circumstances such as those which attended the battle of Lake Erie, fought, except at the very close, at long shot, in efficiency in action. In the tables attached to Sir Howard Douglas's Naval Gunnery, long nines are set down as weighing from twenty-five to thirty-one hundred weight, and thirty-two-pounder carronades as weighing seventeen hundred weight and fourteen pounds. Since the last war, we have increased the weight of carronades and decreased that of long guns. In the *Life of Perry*, I took occasion to state that the weight of metal of the two squadrons was as nearly equal as possible, and I have now made a computation of the weight of the guns of the two squadrons founded on the British statement of the relative forces which Mr. Cooper furnishes in his pamphlet, and the result shows the aggregate weight of the American metal to have been twelve hundred and ninety-five hundred weight, and of the British twelve hundred and thirty-two hundred weight. What a different result this shows from Mr. Cooper's eight hundred and fifty-one pounds of shot thrown by the British at a broadside, to the fourteen hundred and eighty pounds thrown by the Americans, and by which he leaves the impression that we were so much the superior! Lest the writer's correction of the injustice which Mr. Cooper has thus

attempted to do his own country might not be deemed sufficient, it may be pertinent to introduce here the opinion of Sir Howard Douglas as to the relative efficiency of long guns and short. Of carronades, he says, "At close quarters they are very formidable ; but at long ranges they are no match for long guns even of much smaller calibre, and any vessel fitted exclusively with carronades might undoubtedly be destroyed or captured by a vessel of very inferior rate mounting long guns, if her commander knew how to avail himself of the great superiority of his weapons." In the same connexion Sir Howard Douglas calls attention to the fact that Sir James Yeo, in reporting the defeat of the British squadron on Lake Erie, mentioned in strong terms the deficiency of Barclay's squadron in long guns as the cause of its capture. The argument was a good one, but founded on incorrect premises, as the British had thirty-five long guns to our fifteen. Sir Howard Douglas cites the case of the *Phœbe* and *Essex* as strongly illustrating the advantage of long guns over short ones. The *Phœbe* having long eighteens on her main-deck and thirty-two-pounder carronades on the quarter-deck, while the *Essex* had forty thirty-two-pounder carronades and only six long twelves of the shortest and lightest description. Mr. Cooper himself, in adverting to this action, could understand the difference between long guns and short ones, though, in commenting on the Lake Erie battle in his pamphlet, he could present the comparative weight of shot thrown at a broadside, instead of the weight of metal, as a just measure of the relative force.

Mr. Cooper having in this particular defended himself from the allegation of partiality as between his own country and England, by thus making his partiality more glaring in his pamphlet than it is in his *Naval History*, in his farther efforts to disparage Perry repeats the same process, as between the battle of Lake Erie and that of Lake Champlain. He tells us "an officer of great experience, one friendly to

Perry, who had seen much service in battle, visited the squadrons on Lake Erie and Lake Champlain before they were separated ; and he told me that he thought the Lawrence and Niagara, could they have got within effective distance immediately, sufficient to have defeated all of Barclay's force united, especially with a stiff breeze ; and, on the other hand, that he thought the Confiance nearly, if not quite, equal to all M'Donough's. I know this is not the doctrine to gain favour ; but my aim is truth, and not personal popularity."

Let the reader observe the art with which this extravagant proposition is insinuated : that on Lake Erie two of the American vessels were equal to the whole six of the British, while on Lake Champlain one of the British was "nearly, if not quite, equal" to the whole fourteen of the Americans.' He does not base this on any calculation of numbers, or any statement of force, nor does he put it in the form of a deliberate assertion ; he yet states it as if he believed it himself, and puts it forward in a form far better suited to commend it to the belief of the reader, supposing the premises to be believed, than his own assertion would have done. The opinion of "an officer who was friendly to Perry and had seen much service in battle," was certainly more likely to be received as evidence than if it had only seemed to come from Mr. Cooper. He mentions, also, at his own suggestion, and as conclusive evidence of the superiority of the British to the Americans on Lake Champlain, that the Confiance was built by the British after our squadron was completed. He says, "In addition to the small vessels they had the previous year, they built a brig, and as soon as the last American vessel was in frame, they laid the keel of a ship. By constructing the latter a great advantage was secured, care being taken, as a matter of course, to make her of a size sufficient to be certain of possessing the greatest force." Now the facts were precisely similar on Lake Erie ; the British ship Detroit on that lake

having, in like manner to the *Confiance* on Lake Champlain, been built last. The argument to prove the British superiority on Lake Erie was as good as it was to prove it on Lake Champlain ; but Mr. Cooper having written the two accounts under very different influences, did not think proper to use it equally in both cases.

There is something strangely cumulative in Mr. Cooper's obstinacy and wrongheadedness. When he has once taken up one of his favourite paradoxes, every time he recurs to it he increases in extravagance and dogmatism. In his *Biography of Perry*, in *Graham's Magazine*, written, as he says, "merely to draw a sketch of Perry's acts and character," and which biography, be it said in passing, is taken almost entirely, with the exception of the account of the battle of Lake Erie, from that very *Life of Perry* which he reviles and disparages, Mr. Cooper takes occasion to say of Perry, "His professional career was short ; and though it was distinguished by a victory which led to important results, and which was attended by great success, it was not the victory of unrivalled skill and unsurpassed merit that ill-judged commentators have so strenuously asserted. Compared with the battle of Plattsburgh Bay, as a nautical achievement the victory of Lake Erie must always rank second in the eyes of American seamen, and in the eyes of statesmen, as filling the same place in importance. A mere ad-captandum enumeration of guns can never mislead the intelligent and experienced, and these, when acquainted with the facts, will see that the action of the 10th September was one in which defeat would have been disgrace."

This comparison of Mr. Cooper is brought forward with his characteristic bad taste : its injustice is only equalled by its extravagance, and both are worthy of the author. The victory of Lake Champlain was a truly glorious one. M'Donough did nobly all that the occasion called upon him to do, and had he been placed in circumstances of equal embarrassment with Perry, would doubtless have risen as supe-

rior to them as Perry did. He had opportunity to study the position he had to defend, and moor his vessels so as to take every advantage of the localities and strengthen his defences to the utmost. The disparity of force between his squadron and the British was not quite so greatly against him as it was against Perry on Lake Erie. On Lake Erie the British had sixty-three guns to our fifty-four; on Lake Champlain, according to Mr. Cooper, they had one hundred and fifteen or one hundred and sixteen to one hundred and two. To have made the disparity equal, they should have had one hundred and nineteen to one hundred and two. On Lake Erie, the British were formed in line of battle to leeward, and the Americans bore down upon them, receiving their fire, which their great superiority of long guns rendered very destructive. On Lake Champlain, the Americans, on the contrary, awaited the advance of the British at anchor, directing on them a raking fire without interruption in attending to manœuvres, and with the precision of stationary batteries, and the British being obliged to shorten sail and anchor under this terrible cannonade before they could return the fire. In one respect the British on Lake Erie had more advantage of position over the Americans than the Americans had over the British on Lake Champlain. Being under way, they could more easily change their position in the line, if it became necessary, than the Americans on Lake Champlain could perform a similar evolution, being at anchor. Moreover, it was easier for them to wear ship and present fresh batteries, as those on the side with which they were fighting became disabled, than it was for the Americans at anchor on Lake Champlain to perform the corresponding manœuvre by winding. Still, the battle of Lake Champlain was fought under circumstances as favourable to the Americans as that on Lake Erie was in favour of the British. After the *Confiance*, the flag-ship of the British, had anchored and sprung her broadside on M'Donough's ship the *Saratoga*, the *Confiance*, though greatly crip-



plied, was still, from her superior size, a most formidable antagonist. But the Lawrence, encountering on Lake Erie her own antagonist the Detroit, and the Queen Charlotte, the antagonist of the Niagara, had to sustain a far more unequal contest. The Saratoga lost, in killed and wounded, as stated by Mr. Cooper, fifty-seven out of two hundred and twelve souls composing her complement; the Lawrence, on Lake Erie, had eighty-three killed and wounded out of one hundred and forty-two souls, including upward of thirty sick, who composed her complement. Was it, then, in hard fighting that M'Donough's action bore the palm away from Perry's, as is pretended by Mr. Cooper? If not in hard fighting, in what was it that the advantage of M'Donough was so conspicuous over Perry, that, according to Mr. Cooper, "compared with the battle of Plattsburgh Bay, as a nautical achievement the victory of Lake Erie must always rank second in the eyes of American seamen?" It could only have been in the evolution performed by M'Donough, of winding the Saratoga after all his starboard guns were dismounted, so as to bring the larboard guns to bear on the enemy. Mr. Cooper, in describing the preparations for the battle, states, in his *Naval History*, that, "as a matter of course, the Americans were anchored with springs; but, not content with this customary arrangement, Captain M'Donough had laid a kedge broad off on each bow of the Saratoga, and brought their hawsers in upon the two quarters, letting them hang in bights under water. This timely precaution gained the victory." And again, in commenting on the battle in the same work, he says, "The winding of the Saratoga under such circumstances, exposed as she was to the raking broadsides of the *Confiance* and *Linnet*, especially the latter, was a bold, seamanlike, and masterly manœuvre, that required unusual decision and fortitude to imagine and execute." For resorting, then, to this simple and obvious expedient, the only one that remained to him to continue the action, and which the *Confiance* might have

imitated by cutting her cable at the hawse and riding by her spring, M'Donough is preferred by Mr. Cooper to a higher place than Perry, who, after fighting the *Lawrence* as desperately as M'Donough fought the *Saratoga*, and with far greater comparative loss, removed to the *Niagara*, and bearing down with her into the midst of the enemy's squadron, retrieved the day by his own personal exertions. The name of M'Donough is one of the brightest that adorns the history of our navy. Far be it from any one belonging to that corps to imitate Mr. Cooper in his attempt to disparage our illustrious dead. If M'Donough had been placed in the same critical situation with Perry, he would have doubtless been equally distinguished. But he was well sustained by his consorts, and no similar contingency occurred in his engagement to call forth corresponding exertion.

Continuing his spirit of exaggeration in other particulars, we also find Mr. Cooper, in his pamphlet, instead of excusing himself for his attempts, in the *Naval History*, to disparage the heroism of Perry's removal from the *Lawrence* to the *Niagara*, and to elevate Elliott by stating that he had been much longer in the same boat, we find him, in his pamphlet, putting forward such extravagant, yet hollow propositions as the following: "No one can say what Captain Elliott might have done had there been time, and he did, allowing for the difference in time in closing, all that Perry had done, up to the moment when he left his brig—that is to say, he had got as near, or about as near the enemy, as the *Lawrence* ever got."

This "difference of time in closing" is certainly a very large allowance, amounting to near two hours and a half, the two vessels at the commencement of the action having been within hail. After making this large allowance, Mr. Cooper, in defending his assumption that Captain Elliott brought the *Niagara* as near the enemy as the *Lawrence* ever got, comes in contact with the stubborn fact, testified to by the sailing-master of the *Lawrence*, that, when Com-

modore Perry left her, the Niagara was on her weather or larboard beam, from a quarter to a half mile off, the enemy being on the starboard beam, of course the Lawrence lay between the Niagara and the enemy. This testimony is corroborated by a part of the testimony of Captain Brevoort, who commanded the marine guard of the Niagara, where he says, "coming near the Lawrence a boat was discovered." This was the boat containing Perry. According to Captain Brevoort, then, when Commodore Perry was discovered approaching the Niagara in his boat, the Niagara was "coming near the Lawrence." The Niagara, then, must have been rather astern than ahead of the Lawrence, though she got farther off on the Lawrence's weather bow before Perry reached her. Yet Mr. Cooper, while furnishing the means of quoting Captain Brevoort so opportunely, puts forward the following theory of his own, in order to controvert the fact that, when Captain Perry got on board the Niagara, the latter was from a quarter to half a mile on the weather beam or bow of the Lawrence, and to prove, on the contrary, that the Niagara was ahead of the Lawrence, and close aboard of the enemy :

"After reading all the testimony, I have little doubt the difficulty can be got over in the following way : The Lawrence was unmanageable ; the wind had increased, and she got a stern drift. At this moment all the vessels were in motion, and by canting the head of the Lawrence to leeward a little, the Niagara might very well seem to have been on the weather bow, when, in truth, she was ahead as regards the original position. Some of the officers of the Lawrence are said not to have been particularly sagacious, and wounded, occupied, and situated as they were, it is not surprising that they should fall into a mistake on this point. The world itself turns round without millions knowing anything about it."

Here we find Mr. Cooper, one of the few persons in the world who knows that "it turns round," sneering, in the

same paragraph, at the sagacity of the officers of the *Lawrence*, who had so gallantly performed their duty, and giving us the following remarkable specimen of his own, in a theory too purely of his own invention, which he might have made consistent if he had known how to do so. Here he shows us the *Lawrence* with her head canted to leeward, which was indispensable to the perfection of one part of Mr. Cooper's theory, namely, that of having the Niagara on the weather beam or bow, when, according to him, she should have been ahead, and yet, at the same time, having a stern drift. The rest of the squadron was approaching with the wind abaft the beam, Mr. Champlin says "steering large;" the *Lawrence* had her head canted to leeward even more than they, bringing the wind still farther aft, yet having, as she must have had, thus placed in a position to accommodate Mr. Cooper, the wind on the quarter, or nearly aft. Mr. Cooper requires her to have "a stern drift," another clear case of "drifting to windward," or, according to Mr. Cooper, of "mutiny against the laws of physics." Mr. Cooper may well plume himself on his sagacity in defining the law of libel so as to calumniate without stint within its limits, while he uses it profitably against those who, in attempting to defend their country and its inhabitants against his calumnies, have not such an exact and calculating perception as he has as to the limits within which safety is to be found. He had better keep to this work, which he certainly understands and profitably practises, than to attempt to illustrate the want of sagacity of navy officers by examples such as these.

Having sneered at the sagacity of the officers of the *Lawrence*, Mr. Cooper ridicules, with equal self-complacency, the alleged want of nautical skill of Messrs. Burges and Duer. The latter gentleman had been in the navy as well as Mr. Cooper, and is, doubtless, not inferior to him in professional information, though Mr. Cooper takes occasion, with becoming modesty, to say, "I am aware that Dr. Duer

was once in the navy, but I doubt if he ever knew the names of the running gear of an Albany sloop." It is only Mr. Cooper who learns seamanship by intuition, and whom one or two cruises make a better sailor than Hull, Chauncey, or Stewart. Both Mr. Burges and Mr. Duer were contending under generous impulses alone in a good cause. They had truth and justice on their side, and could feel the consciousness of expressing their honest sentiments. Mr. Burges had applied the expression "drifted to windward" to the manner in which the *Lawrence*, when she discontinued the action and hauled out of the line, was left by the rest of the squadron, which were running more large. Of this Mr. Cooper says, "If this were not flat burglary, it was clearly mutiny against the laws of physics." In attempting to annihilate Mr. Duer's seamanship, Mr. Cooper repeats and defends, in his pamphlet, a gross blunder which he had perpetrated in his *Naval History*, and which Mr. Duer had pointed out. Mr. Cooper had begun by representing the wind at S.E., and the British vessels on the larboard tack, hove to, and, consequently, heading S.S.W. or S.W. by S. Our vessels are represented by Mr. Cooper as steering S.W. or S.W. by W. at the time the *Niagara* passed the *Lawrence*. He then goes on to say, "The British vessels having filled, and the wind beginning to increase, the two squadrons moved slowly ahead, the *Lawrence* necessarily dropping astern, and partially out of the combat. At this moment the *Niagara* passed to the westward, a short distance to the windward of the *Lawrence*, steering for the head of the enemy's line, and the *Caledonia* followed to leeward." Thus Mr. Cooper makes the *Niagara* pass the *Lawrence* to the westward and to windward, when the wind being S.E., the westward was necessarily to leeward, and is himself guilty of the "mutiny against the law of physics" which he condemns in Mr. Burges. In his pamphlet, indeed, he attempts to make it appear that he meant the word "passed," as applied by him to the *Niagara's* passing the

Lawrence, to have the signification of steered or stood. But as the Niagara, even by his own statement, did not steer farther west than S.W. by W., his explanation only increases the absurdity. The truth is that Mr. Cooper, in his own estimation, cannot be wrong even by accident; and the defence of paradoxes is nearer to his heart than the acknowledgment of truth.

But the rarest specimen that we have of Mr. Cooper's seamanship is furnished us in his Biography of Perry, in Graham's Magazine, where he attempts to illustrate the battle of Lake Erie, fought under way, by reference to that of Lake Champlain, fought by vessels at anchor, and to prove that there must have been a dead calm on Lake Erie, because the Lawrence did not drift into the enemy's line after she was disabled, as the British schooner Chubb, on Lake Champlain, drifted into the American line. In order to enable the reader who is not a seaman to judge of the congruity and logic of Mr. Cooper's reasoning, it should be premised that, on Lake Erie, the vessels of both squadrons being under way, were subject, in a common manner, to the agency of winds and currents, whereas, on Lake Champlain, the Chubb was adrift, and the American line, into which she was carried, was at anchor. "It is physically impossible that a vessel, with her sails loose, should not drift a quarter of a mile in an hour, had there been even a two-knot breeze. The want of this drift, which would have carried the Lawrence directly down into the English line had it existed, effectually shows, then, that there must have been a considerable period of the action in which there was little or no wind, and corroborates the direct testimony that has been given on this point," and the subject is continued after the following fashion, in a note: "In the battle of Plattsburg Bay, which took place the succeeding year, the wind was so light and baffling, that the British anchored before they got as close as they had intended to go. Still, one of their vessels, the Chubb, was crippled, and she drifted into

the American line, in the first half hour of the engagement. The distance this vessel actually drifted, under such circumstances, was about as far as that at which Perry engaged the enemy, proving that the latter must also have drifted an equal distance after he was disabled, had there been any wind." And here we take leave of Mr. Cooper's seamanship, according to which, a line of vessels hove to and one at anchor are equally motionless. It may be remarked, however, of his seamanship, that it is quite effective when it is exercising its appropriate functions, and assisting him in his character of a novelist. By crossing the ocean a few times, sufficient notion is obtained of the sea and ships to convey a picturesque impression. Nautical slang and the jargon of the forecastle are readily caught. But when Mr. Cooper attempts to exhibit himself as a nice nautical critic, it is not strange that he should be betrayed into gross blunders of seamanship, which the writer feels some compunction in exposing. He is aware that this is no inconsiderable offence. To make manifest Mr. Cooper's want of fairness, of justice, of good taste, or of decency, might be forgiven; but to detect his ignorance of seamanship is to touch him to the quick—to wound incurably that vanity which, however excessive on most subjects, has its stronghold afloat.

But to return to the question of the Niagara having been in close action, as pretended by Mr. Cooper, before Perry went on board of her. We have seen that, when Perry left the Lawrence, the Niagara was, according to the sailing-master of the Lawrence, from a quarter to half a mile on the weather-beam of the Lawrence, Captain Brevoort's evidence putting her still farther astern, and the Lawrence being, in either case, between the Niagara and the enemy. Down to the time of the Niagara's passing to windward of the Lawrence, two hours and a half after the action had commenced on our part, even Mr. Cooper does not pretend that she was in close action. If, therefore, the Niagara

were carried by Captain Elliott into close action, it must have been between the time of Perry's leaving the *Lawrence* and getting on board of the *Niagara*. If the *Niagara* were near half a mile to windward, as is testified by the sailing-master of the *Lawrence*, the present Captain W. V. Taylor, there was little opportunity for her to get into close action during the fifteen minutes Perry occupied in reaching her. Perry himself stated that, far from being in close action when he got on board of her, she was keeping a course by the wind, which would, in a few minutes, have carried her entirely out of the action, to prevent which, he first hove to, and immediately after put his helm up, and kept away eight points or a whole right angle.

Again, if the *Niagara* was in close action with the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte* when Perry got on board of her, as Mr. Cooper pretends, and the *Lawrence* had dropped out of action, as he also pretends, what occasion was there for the *Lawrence* to strike at this particular conjuncture? She only struck after Perry got on board of the *Niagara*. When the few surviving officers and men of the *Lawrence*, as they watched the course of their beloved and heroic commander, saw him pass in safety over the gangway of the *Niagara*, they greeted him with three hearty cheers. It was only after this that the colours of the *Lawrence* were struck to prevent farther needless effusion of blood, as she was incapable of resistance. As the colours of the *Lawrence* came down, the crews of the British vessels mustered on their weather bulwarks and sent forth prolonged cheers; and, according to the *Life of Commodore Elliott*, the *Detroit* commenced lowering her boats to take possession of the *Lawrence*. Now, if the *Niagara* were right opposite the *Detroit* and *Queen Charlotte*, and close on board of them, as Mr. Cooper pretends, and if the *Lawrence* had dropped out of the action, as he also pretends, would not the *Niagara* instead of the *Lawrence* have drawn their fire? What was to be gained, in such a supposed state of things, by firing at the *Lawrence*,



which was a wreck, and had long since ceased to be formidable ! Besides, had she dropped out of the action, and had her place been occupied by the Niagara, the Lawrence would have been out of the range of the enemy's guns, and the Niagara directly in the range of them. The Lawrence could then have received no farther injury, and there could have been no motive or excuse for striking. It could not have been as Mr. Cooper pretends. The Lawrence, when she struck, must have been opposite the Detroit and Queen Charlotte, under their guns, close aboard of them ; the Niagara far away to windward, and not yet closely engaged. Upon no other theory than this, supported, as it is, by the weight of testimony and all the concurrent circumstances, can the fact of the Lawrence's striking, to avoid farther destruction of her few surviving officers and men, be accounted for. The general cheers from all the vessels of the British squadron, their crews mustering for the purpose on the weather bulwarks, and the lowering of the Detroit's boats to take possession of the Lawrence, are all wholly inconsistent with the Niagara being at that time in close action ; according to Mr. Cooper, " as near, or about as near, as the Lawrence ever got ;" or " nearer," as is pretended in the *Life of Commodore Elliott*. This work, in accounting for the unfavourable testimony of the officers of the British squadron as to Captain Elliott's conduct during the action, says, " They had beaten the first (Commodore Perry), and had taken his ship, and at the very moment when Captain Elliott was bearing down in the Niagara upon the head of the British line, the crew of the Detroit, after giving three cheers, were lowering their boats to take possession of her." It is asserted, then, on behalf of Captain Elliott, that he was still only " bearing down in the Niagara upon the head of the British line," at the time the crew of the Detroit were cheering and lowering their boats on account of the surrender of the Lawrence, which took place after Perry boarded the Niagara ; though the same work pretends, in another place,

going in this respect a single step farther than Mr. Cooper, "that the Lawrence never was in close action, and that the Niagara got nearer to the enemy before Commodore Perry boarded her than the Lawrence had ever been." If, then, the Niagara had been in close action, "as near, or about as near, as the Lawrence ever got," as is asserted by Mr. Cooper, or "nearer," as is pretended on behalf of Commodore Elliott, who will believe that the British crews would have been allowed to quit their guns, give over even for a moment their exertions in loading and firing, and muster on the weather bulwarks to cheer, thus encountering all the additional exposure of life with a twenty-gun brig firing upon her within canister distance? It must be distinctly remembered, that the Lawrence only struck after Perry had got on board the Niagara, and that it was previous to his thus getting on board of her that Mr. Cooper pretends that Captain Elliot had taken her "abeam of the Detroit and Queen Charlotte, distant from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet, or about as near as the Lawrence ever got."

Let us see how this extravagant pretension, adopted from the Life of Commodore Elliott, corresponds with another of the statements contained in that work, in which the credit of the victory is given to Commodore Elliott on account of his having gone astern and accompanied the small vessels in closing with the enemy. "The whole force of our squadron being now concentrated upon the four large ships of the enemy, they struck soon after, or about *thirty minutes* after Captain Elliott left the Niagara. Thus were the two squadrons engaged for nearly three hours; our own beginning to fire when distant about a mile and a half, continually approaching nearer, and being in close action about *thirty minutes*." Thus it is admitted on behalf of Captain Elliott that the squadron, and, consequently, the Niagara, was in close action but thirty minutes, and that the British squadron struck thirty minutes after he left the Niagara. Does not this statement, brought forward on his own behalf, annihili-

late the pretension of his having ever brought the Niagara into close action ?

Mr. Cooper, while strenuously vindicating Captain Elliott throughout, and insisting that he did bring the Niagara into close action before Perry went on board of her, does not pretend to deny that she was out of close action during the two hours and a half that the action had lasted previous to Perry's boarding her ; but still he defends the manœuvres of the Niagara on the ground of Perry's signal at the commencement of the action : " Engage as you come up, every one against his opponent in the line, as before designated."

Mr. (now commodore) D. Turner, and others, give the signal, " Engage as you come up, each against the enemy's vessel, as designated in previous orders ;" but we will suppose that the signal contained the expression " in the line." Mr. Cooper states, " But Commodore Elliott says, and I shall presently show that he says truly, that his senior officer, Captain Perry, had given him a station in the line, astern of the Caledonia ; that he enjoined it on him to keep that station, and that it was for him who gave the order to take the responsibility of changing his own line of battle, if circumstances required a change." Again he says, " The enemy had many long guns, and as the Americans came within their reach, they opened principally on the Lawrence, the nearest of the large vessels. Finding he was approaching too slowly and suffering heavily, Perry made sail in the Lawrence, to get the sooner within the reach of his carronades. The witnesses who testify against Captain Elliott evidently think the latter ought to have imitated this manœuvre, as the wind would have carried the Niagara down as well and as fast as it did the Lawrence. They also appear to think that, as Captain Elliott was directed to engage the Charlotte, which ship shifted her berth a short distance farther to the westward within the first half hour, that it was his duty to follow her at all hazards. They overlook the all-important fact that Captain Perry had formally

laid down a line of battle ; that he had ‘enjoined it on the commanders to preserve their stations in the line ;’ that the orders to engage different vessels meant to fire at those vessels *from* the line, and that the first object was to preserve the line as given, which alone could give concentration and order to the attack. If Perry led ahead of his own order of battle, he was irresponsible, but others would not have been.”

Mr. Cooper having thus given Captain Elliott credit for not having taken the responsibility of breaking the line in order to run to leeward of the Caledonia and engage his designated opponent, on the very next page gives him credit for taking the responsibility in running to windward of her, and placing her as well as the Lawrence between him and the enemy. “After a time Captain Elliott determined to pass the Caledonia on his own responsibility. He says he thought Perry must have been killed.” Why did Captain Elliott think Perry must be killed ? Was it because the Lawrence had been near two hours and a half in close action with her own antagonist the Detroit, and with the Queen Charlotte, the antagonist of the Niagara ? Why might he not have assumed that responsibility earlier, on the plea that, if he did not seek out his antagonist and relieve the Lawrence of her fire, that Perry would be killed ? But, having “determined to pass the Caledonia on his own responsibility,” why did not Captain Elliott, if his object was close action and to relieve the Lawrence, go to leeward of the Caledonia and the Lawrence ? the enemy was to leeward. By going to leeward he placed his fresh vessel between the Lawrence and the enemy, thus protecting the Lawrence and assailing the enemy, while by going to windward of both, those vessels at the same time became a protection to his vessel from the shot of the enemy, and he was cut off from the ability to use his battery on the enemy. It is said in defence of Captain Elliott in his life, that “he once thought of passing to leeward and breaking the British line ; but, on consulting with Mr. Magrath, an officer of great

coolness, he came to the just conclusion that such a movement would be destructive." It would have been well for Captain Elliott had he followed his own impulse, instead of yielding, at so critical a moment, to the irresponsible suggestion of his purser. The line of duty in such a case is so obvious, that it seems an insult to common sense to enlarge upon it; yet a remark of Lord Rodney, on an occurrence in the unfortunate battle of Admiral Byng off Minorca in 1756, is so directly applicable to the case of the Niagara, that I cannot forego the impulse to quote it. The circumstances were these: one of the ships, the *Intrepid*, having been disabled by the loss of her foretopmast, created an obstruction in the line which delayed the ships astern from getting up to support the ships ahead, which were sustaining the whole fire of the enemy's line in passing. Some of the ships passed to windward and some to leeward of the *Intrepid*. Lord Rodney, in adverting to this occasion in a note to Clerk's *Naval Tactics*, significantly remarks, "They ought all to have gone to leeward, as the enemy were to leeward." If Mr. Cooper had made the note instead of Lord Rodney, it would be that the ships astern should have preserved their stations until ordered out of them. Though there have been few instances of ships in action willingly taking a station so as to place their consorts, whether disabled or otherwise, between themselves and the enemy, there was a brilliant instance in this very battle on Lake Erie, of a young officer, in the headlong ardour of getting up with the enemy, placing himself between that enemy and one of his consorts. The gallant and amiable Lieutenant Thomas Holdup Stevens, who commanded the little sloop *Trippe*, ran to leeward instead of to windward of the *Caledonia*, Lieutenant Turner, and took his station on her starboard beam. The scene that followed had better be given in the language of Stevens himself: "Turner ordered me to get out of his way; I replied that I should not: he then hailed, to say that, if I did not, he would fire through me. I replied, 'Fire away!'

which he did, through his own foresail and my jib, carrying it almost all away." This scene calls very vividly to mind a similar one, related to have occurred in the battle between Anson and La Jonquiere, off Finisterre, in 1747. The Bristol, Captain Montague, having got up with the French ship *Invincible* and brought her to action, the *Pembroke*, Captain Fincher, attempted to get between them, desiring the captain of the Bristol to put his helm a-starboard, or he should be on board of him ; to this Captain Montague replied, "Run on board and be d—d ; neither you nor any other man shall come between me and my enemy !"

Mr. Cooper has stated, in his pamphlet, the important fact, that "the *Queen Charlotte* shifted her berth a short distance farther to the westward within the first half hour." He does not, however, account for this fact ; neither did he in his *Naval History*, where it is twice mentioned as follows : "The *Lawrence*, however, appeared to be the principal aim of the enemy, and before the fire had lasted any material time, the *Detroit*, *Hunter*, and *Queen Charlotte* were directing most of their fire against her." Again he says, "The effect of the cannonade was necessarily to deaden the wind, and for nearly two hours there was very little air. During all this time, the weight of the enemy's fire continued to be directed at the *Lawrence* ; even the *Queen Charlotte*, having filled, passed the *Hunter*, and got under the stern of the *Detroit*, where she kept up a destructive cannonade on this devoted vessel." Mr. Cooper does not give the reason for this important fact ; but Captain Barclay does, when he says, in his official report to Sir James Yeo, two days after the action, "The other brig of the enemy, apparently destined to engage the *Queen Charlotte*, supported in like manner by two schooners, kept so far to windward as to render the *Queen Charlotte's* twenty-four-pound carronades useless." The officers of the *Queen Charlotte* assigned also as a cause for firing at the *Lawrence* instead of the *Niagara*, "Because the *Niagara* was so far off we could not injure her."

The purport of the signal made by Perry at the commencement of the action is thus variously given by the officers of the squadron. Lieutenant Turner says, "The signal having been made by Commodore Perry for our vessels to engage as they came up, each against the enemy's vessel, as designated in previous order." Lieutenant Stevens reports, "Engage as you come up, every one against his opponent, in the line as before designated;" and adds, "this signal had been established a few days previous to the action, and designated particularly by name the vessels of our squadron which should attack the vessels of the English squadron also named." This statement of Mr. Stevens effectually connects the signal with the order of battle, assigning to each vessel her particular antagonist. Mr. Champlin has, "Engage as you come up, every one against his opponent, in the line before designated." Mr. Breese says, "Engage as you come up, each against his opponent in the British line, as designated by the order of battle." Mr. Brownell says, "Engage as you come up, each vessel against her opponent, as previously designated;" and Mr. Taylor, "Signal was made for each vessel to engage her opponent, as designated in previous orders." Can any different construction be put upon this than that each vessel should engage her designated opponent? The line referred to in the signal was, doubtless, the British line, and Mr. Breese has it "opponent in the British line, as designated in the order of battle." No one had a better right than Mr. Breese to know the exact words of the signal; as secretary to the commodore, it was his duty to take notes of the action, and, in the absence of any regular signal officer, he doubtless acted in that capacity. Now, shortly before the action, Commodore Perry had issued to the commanders of vessels the following written orders, accompanied by diagrams. First, a line of battle arranging the vessels at a distance of half a cable's length from each other, enjoining upon the commanders to preserve their stations in the line,

and, in all cases, to *keep as near the Lawrence as possible*. Second, an *order of attack*; in which each vessel of our line was designated to attack a *particular* vessel in the British line; the Lawrence, in this order, was designated to attack the heaviest ship, the Detroit, and the Niagara was designated to attack the Queen Charlotte. In the diagram the Niagara is drawn broadside and broadside with the Queen Charlotte. At the time when these orders were given to each of the commanders, they were farther expressly instructed that it was the intention of the commodore to bring the enemy to close action as soon as possible, and the last emphatic injunction with which he dismissed them was, "that he could not, in case of difficulty, advise them better than in the words of Lord Nelson, 'If you lay your enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your place!'"

Now, what construction does the reader suppose Mr. Cooper, the logician, puts on the order, "Engage as you *come up*, every one against his opponent in the line, as before designated?" He construes it into "fire at those vessels *from* the line." The italics are his own. Engaging the designated opponent was subordinate, according to Mr. Cooper, to keeping the line. Now, what upright and zealous officer commanding one of these vessels would have failed to consider the engagement of his designated opponent the material part of this order, even without the comprehensive and emphatic commentary of Perry, that his object was to bring the enemy to close action as soon as possible, and if they laid their enemy close alongside, they would not be out of their places? With such a commentary, could there be any doubt as to which way the path of duty lay for the Niagara? Let us leave the answer of the question, not to Mr. Cooper, but to every right-minded officer and every true-hearted citizen.

But there was a practical commentary as to the mode in which the signal, "engage as you come up, every one against his opponent in the line, as before designated," should be obeyed. After the British squadron had been approached



near enough to discover the order in which it was arranged, Perry perceived that the Detroit was towards the head of the British line, and the Queen Charlotte towards the centre. Had the American squadron gone into action as it was then formed, the Niagara would have had the Detroit, greatly the heaviest of the enemy's ships, for her antagonist, and the Lawrence the Queen Charlotte. But the order of attack had designated the Lawrence as the antagonist of the Detroit, and the Niagara of the Queen Charlotte. Perry, therefore, immediately, on making the discovery, remodelled his line by passing ahead of the Niagara so as to get opposite the Detroit, and caused the Niagara so to place herself as to correspond to the station of the Queen Charlotte in the enemy's line. When the Queen Charlotte, soon after the commencement of the action, left her station, because, as stated by her officers, the Niagara was too far off to be reached by the guns of the Queen Charlotte, and, passing the Hunter, joined the Detroit in firing at the Lawrence, was it not clear that the Niagara should at once have imitated the evolution, passed the Caledonia, and laid herself alongside of her antagonist, leaving the Caledonia opposite hers, which was the Hunter? The order of attack, which had been communicated to all the commanders, was an all-sufficient warrant; and if that warrant were not sufficient, there was the order, "in all cases, to keep as near to the commanding officer's vessel as possible;" and, above all, the last solemn injunction, "if you lay your enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your place."

Mr. Cooper farther says in defence of Captain Elliott for not immediately passing the Caledonia in the Niagara, when the Queen Charlotte passed the Hunter, so as to keep opposite her antagonist, and relieve the Lawrence from the addition of her fire, "The Lawrence, sailing better, left the Caledonia astern, the latter being a merchant brig armed for the cruise. This, necessarily, kept the Niagara astern also, which brig, following directly in the wake of the Cale-

donia, was obliged to brace her main-topsail sharp aback, in order to prevent going into her. These were the only occasions, while Captain Elliott was in her, that the Niagara had her topsail aback and jib brailed. Captain Perry was present; knew best how much he wanted assistance, and was bound, on every principle of military service, to take the responsibility of changing his own line of battle. If he was not there for such a purpose, when necessary, he was not there for the purpose of commanding in chief. It was clearly his duty to have ordered the Niagara to have passed the Caledonia if circumstances required it; and it was the duty of Captain Elliott to remain where he had been placed, until circumstances induced him to think his commander could not control events. Any other course would have led to the grossest insubordination, and Captain Elliott might have been ruined in the event of an accident." Captain Elliott might have been ruined, in the opinion of Mr. Cooper, by following the opposite course from that which has secured Mr. Cooper's solitary approbation, but not in the opinion of the navy and the country. Mr. Cooper does not seem to be aware that the duty of preserving a vessel's station in the line has reference to other matters than her relative position with reference to her second ahead. If the second ahead drops astern, and cannot keep her station, it is the duty of the next vessel to pass her, otherwise the bad sailing or other disability of one vessel might occasion the delinquency of all astern of her. Mr. Cooper goes so far as to say explicitly, "the Niagara was ordered to remain astern of the Caledonia." No such order was given. There was an order for "the several vessels to keep within half a cable's length of each other, and enjoining it upon the commanders to preserve their stations in the line, and, in all cases, to keep as near to the commanding officer's vessel as possible." The station of the Niagara in the line was, therefore, one cable's length astern of the Lawrence, plus the length of the Caledonia, and whenever, if ever, the Cal-

edonia could not keep her station one half cable's length astern of the Lawrence, it became the duty of the Niagara to pass her; a duty rendered doubly imperative by the injunction, in *all cases* to keep as *near* to the commanding officer's vessel as possible; a duty farther enforced by the paramount requirement of the order of attack, which constituted the Niagara the designated antagonist of the Queen Charlotte, and sanctioned by the comprehensive justification for any excess of valour, "if you lay your enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your place."

It is admitted on behalf of Captain Elliott, in the biographical notice of him, evidently written under his auspices, that it was his duty to pass the Caledonia at once after the Queen Charlotte passed the Hunter, and succour the Lawrence from the additional attack of the Queen Charlotte; it is also insisted in that work, in the following explicit manner, that he performed this duty: "So soon as the squadrons, continually approaching, were sufficiently near for carronades to take effect on the hull, the Queen Charlotte left the line, bore away from the fire of the Niagara, and directed her whole battery of carronades upon the Lawrence. Captain Elliott, perceiving this movement, ordered the Caledonia, then directly ahead of the Niagara, out of the line, to enable the latter to pass onward to the assistance of the Lawrence."

The officers of the Niagara take the same view of their duty in this emergency, as is evident from the following extract from their letter to the Secretary of the Navy, which shows, also, what their interpretation was of the signal "engage your designated opponent in the line." "At this time the Queen Charlotte was discovered to bear up, and stand away from the Niagara's fire. Captain Elliott ordered the fore and aft main-sail to be hauled out and the jib sheet aft, in order to come up with her, *she* being the *vessel* we meant particularly to engage. The Queen Charlotte having gained the Detroit's lee, and the Lawrence gaining ahead,

Captain Elliott ordered the Caledonia to bear up and leave us room to close with the Lawrence, which was done, and the action carried on with great vigour and spirit on both sides." So, also, Mr. Magrath states, "Finding the Queen Charlotte to make sail ahead from our fire as we supposed, Captain Elliott hailed the Caledonia, and ordered her helm put up, which was done, and the Niagara passed ahead by filling her main-topsail, and setting the jib and fore and aft main-sail." Mr. Cooper says of me, "He constantly contradicts the best evidence the case allows, on altogether insufficient grounds." Again he says of me, "He constantly contradicts his own witnesses. Captain Mackenzie falls into this childish error constantly." Now Mr. Cooper goes on to say, that "the officers of the Niagara were the best witnesses as to the position of their vessel." Also, "Mr. Magrath was probably the best witness of which the case admitted." And yet we find Mr. Cooper himself flatly contradicting the witnesses whom he thus eulogizes and makes his own; admitting, in conformity with the evidence of which I have made use, and in flat contradiction to the officers of the Niagara, whose evidence he pronounces the best, that the Niagara did not immediately follow and keep alongside of her designated antagonist, the Queen Charlotte, when she closed up astern of the Detroit and opened her fire on the Lawrence, and elaborately justifying Captain Elliott for not doing so on the ground of its being his duty "to remain where he had been placed, until circumstances had induced him to think his commander could not control events." It seems, then, that neither Captain Elliott nor the officers of the Niagara are willing to accept the excuses made for their vessel by Mr. Cooper, but admit that it was her duty to follow and engage the Queen Charlotte and relieve the Lawrence. Mr. Cooper and his witnesses are at direct variance, both as to opinions and as to facts; they contending that they fulfilled their duty in following the vessel they "meant particularly to engage;" he admitting that they did not do so, and that it was not their duty.

It is apparent that, had the Niagara immediately followed and engaged the Queen Charlotte, it would have been no disobedience of orders. But a disobedience of orders, when it proceeds from a noble and generous motive, has often met not merely with forgiveness, but commendation. In the battle off Cape St. Vincent, Sir John Jervis, while engaged with the Spanish fleet on opposite tacks, made signal to tack in succession. Nelson, whose station was in the rear of the British line, perceived that the Spanish van was bearing away before the wind, with the intention of going large, joining a part of their fleet from which they had been separated, and forming a line to leeward. To prevent these results, Nelson disobeyed the signal and wore ship, which brought him almost immediately into action with several of the heaviest of the Spanish ships; and his example being followed by Collingwood and others, the consequence was, that, instead of the ordinary undecisive result of the fleet engagements of the time, four of the Spanish ships were taken. As soon as the action was over, Nelson went on board the admiral's ship, where Sir John Jervis personally received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and told him he could not sufficiently thank him. So, at the Nile, Nelson had directed his ships to anchor on the outside of the French line, Captain Foley, in the *Goliath*, outsailing the *Zealous*, which was at the head of the line, and *passing* her, conceived the idea of getting between the French and the shore, in the belief that the enemy would not be so well prepared to receive an attack on that side, and that where the French ships had room to swing round, there would be room also for him to anchor. He was followed by five ships, all, in fact, that were ahead of Nelson, who first anchored with the *Vanguard* on the outside of the French, followed by the rest of his fleet. The wilful disobedience of Nelson at Copenhagen, when signal was made for him to discontinue the engagement and haul off, putting his glass to his blind eye when the signal was reported to him, and protest-

ing he did not see it, is familiar to every one. The disobedience which is prompted by an intuitive perception of a critical moment for attacking with advantage, and a chivalrous impulse to seize it, is a very different thing from the disobedience which is committed in withdrawing from battle. It would have been no disobedience for Captain Elliott, when the Queen Charlotte left her station in the line to assail the Lawrence, to have followed her example in the Niagara. The order of attack which made the Niagara the antagonist of the Queen Charlotte, practically explained by the change in the line which took place shortly before the engagement commenced, to render the arrangements of that order of attack complete, would have been ample authority.

We have seen that Mr. Cooper expresses the opinion that Captain Perry, as commander-in-chief, being present, and best knowing how much he wanted assistance, should have ordered the Niagara to pass the Caledonia if circumstances required it, and that, not having done so, it was the duty of Captain Elliott to remain astern of the Caledonia until--when? until a very peculiar period described by Mr. Cooper as follows: "until circumstances induced him to think his commander could not control events." It is true Perry was commander-in-chief of the squadron, but he was also captain of his own ship. As commander-in-chief, he had elaborately explained his views, and especially his intentions to come at once to close quarters, and made every conceivable preparation for the coming engagement. Immediately before the battle began, in farther exercise of his functions as commander-in-chief, he remodelled the line so as to fulfil the provisions of his order of battle. After the battle began, it only remained for every commander to obey the ample orders he had received, to do his whole duty, and, above all, to follow wherever the commander led. When the Lawrence became closely engaged, the whole resources of Perry were devoted to fighting his own vessel. He himself says, in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, "Having previously

to the engagement, given all the orders which I thought necessary to enable every officer to do his duty, and feeling confidence in them all, I was, after it commenced, necessarily too much engaged in the actual scene before me to reflect deliberately upon the cause which could induce Captain Elliott to keep his vessel so distant both from me and the enemy." After the delinquency of the Niagara had thus become obvious, it was the more urgently necessary that the fire of the Lawrence should be sustained by all the exertions that Perry is known to have put forth. If the signal haliards continued rove in the crippled condition of the Lawrence, and signals might be discerned through the smoke that enveloped her, what order could have been conveyed by signal more comprehensive or more appropriate than those already given? "Engage your designated antagonist!" "Lay your enemy alongside!"

But, in addition to the various orders that we have enumerated before the battle, and the signal, after it commenced, for engaging designated antagonists, furnishing Captain Elliott with a sufficient warrant for passing the Caledonia when the Queen Charlotte passed the Hunter, were any warrant necessary for the performance of so obvious a duty, still later in the action, after the Lawrence had made sail to close with the enemy, there was a farther order passed by trumpet for the vessels astern to follow her, which order was responded to and passed by Captain Elliott. His Life thus describes this circumstance: "There was the farther order passed by trumpet for the squadron to close up, which order was responded to and passed by Captain Elliott." In Perry's official report this fact is stated as follows: "At fifteen minutes before twelve the enemy commenced firing: at five minutes before twelve the action commenced on our part. Finding their fire very destructive, owing to their long guns, and it being mostly directed at the Lawrence, I made sail and directed the other vessels to follow for the purpose of closing with the enemy." Cap

tain Elliott's Life thus again alludes to the same important occurrence : " It was this destructive fire from the long guns which caused him (Perry) to bear down for the purpose of closing, and to direct the other ships to follow him." With this distinct verbal order of Perry, and this distinct acknowledgment of it in Captain Elliott's biography staring him in the face, Mr. Cooper can yet reason after the following fashion : " Finding he was approaching too slowly, and suffering heavily, Perry made sail in the *Lawrence*, to get the sooner within reach of his carronades. The witnesses who testify against Captain Elliott evidently think the latter ought to have imitated this manœuvre, as the wind would have carried the *Niagara* down as well and as fast as it did the *Lawrence*. They also appear to think that, as Captain Elliott was directed to engage the *Charlotte*, which ship shifted her berth a short distance within the first half hour, it was his duty to follow her at all hazards." The only person who does not appear to be of this opinion is Mr. Cooper. Even the officers of the *Niagara* admit this to have been their duty, and claim to have performed it.

And here, by way of farther illustration, it may not be amiss to introduce the speech made to his crew by Captain Elliott, immediately after he had spoken the commodore, when the latter passed him to take his station opposite the *Detroit*, as testified to before the Court of Inquiry, in 1815, by Midshipman J. B. Montgomery. " Captain Elliott spoke Captain Perry while we were passing to leeward. Captain Elliott mentioned to his crew that it was the commodore's intention to bring the enemy to close action immediately. He told them it was probable we should receive one or two raking fires from the enemy, and advised them to receive it with coolness and not be alarmed. He observed, that we should not commence firing until within musket-shot distance, and then, if every man did his duty, we should flog them in ten minutes. He then ordered them to their quarters." How were these intentions of Perry, as thus



explained by Captain Elliott to his crew, and immediately after carried into effect by the Lawrence, fulfilled by the Niagara ?

Here, then, we have an order of attack, designating the antagonist of each vessel ; we have a solemn injunction of Perry to his captains, before the battle, that he could not advise them, in case of difficulty, better than in the words of Lord Nelson, " If you lay your enemy alongside, you cannot be out of your place." We have a signal for each vessel to engage her opponent ; we have an order by trumpet, after the action began, to close up ; in the words of Commodore Elliott's Life, " to direct the other ships to follow him." We have the example of the commander-in-chief leading close towards the enemy, yet Mr. Cooper says that the Niagara was not bound to follow the Lawrence into close action ; that " the man who reasons thus is no tactician or disciplinarian." Sir George Rodney, in reporting the circumstances of his battle off Martinico, in April, 1780, says, " At fifty-five minutes after eleven, A.M., I made the signal for battle ; a few minutes after, the signal that it was my intention to engage close, and *of course the admiral's ship to be the example.*" Mr. Clerk, in noticing the misconduct of Admiral Lestock in the battle off Toulon, in 1744, in which Lestock abandoned his commanding admiral, who bore down with great gallantry to engage the enemy, and lived to malign and persecute the man whom he had betrayed, makes the following judicious remarks, even more applicable to the battle of Lake Erie than the occasion to which it referred : " A general at the head of his troops, and leading them on to action, has long been considered a sufficient signal ; and Mr. Mathews, when going down to battle, as admiral in the centre, should have been the example for his whole fleet, whether the signal was given at ten or twelve o'clock ; the brave commanders of the Norfolk and Marlborough, his seconds, were of this mind, as has also been Sir George Rodney upon a later occasion. Therefore, ev-

ery ship which kept her wind, and did not follow the admiral, Mr. Mathews, down to fight the enemy, ought only to be considered as breakers of the line."

Having stated so much in reply to Mr. Cooper's arguments with regard to the battle of Lake Erie, I propose to notice what is more particularly personal to myself in his pamphlet. Abuse of me is, after all, the object of his production. He has made the alleged detection of a very small number of errors in the *Life of Perry*, only one of which I concede may be indeed an error, the pretext for unmeasured vituperation. The chief of these errors, as pointed out by him, is my allegation that Captain Elliott, after having complained of the injustice of Commodore Perry's official report of the battle of Lake Erie, subsequently, when the finding of the British court-martial on Captain Barclay had made his conduct appear so much more unfavourably, endeavoured to substantiate that report before the Court of Inquiry into his conduct, by making a question as to its accuracy a leading one to almost every witness. Mr. Cooper says, with an exemplified copy of the Court of Inquiry before him, that it was not put by Captain Elliott to a single witness. In the *Life of Commodore Elliott* is a copy of the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, which purports to be a complete one. In this copy it appears that the question, as to the correctness of Commodore Perry's official report, was asked of five out of the seven witnesses which were examined. The question appears to have been asked of Lieutenant Nelson Webster by the court; of Lieutenant Yarnall the question was also asked, it does not appear by whom; of Midshipman J. B. Montgomery the question was asked, it does not appear by whom; it is asked of Midshipman Adams, without its appearing by whom; of Lieutenant Forrest it is asked in like manner, without its appearing by whom. The succeeding question in this case was put by the judge-advocate. Some of the questions in this copy of the record are set down as having been asked by the judge-advocate,

by the court, or by Captain Elliott. In the single case of Lieutenant Webster is it stated that the question was asked by the court. Is it strange, then, that, without any direct evidence as to whom the questions were asked by, I should have received the impression that they were asked by Captain Elliott? The court held its investigation into the conduct of Captain Elliott at his own request, and the order from the Navy Department distinctly stated that it was given in consequence of its having been informed that the conduct of Captain Elliott had been misrepresented by the proceedings of a court of inquiry in Great Britain, and that "justice to the reputation of Captain Elliott, and to the navy of the United States, required that a true statement of the facts in relation to his conduct on that occasion be exhibited to the world." A very small number of witnesses, chiefly composed of officers of the Niagara, and including neither Perry nor any of the commanders of the other vessels, were summoned. The questions, by whomsoever put, equally tended to the justification of Captain Elliott, and showed a familiarity with information that would seem to have been derived from him; he acquiesced, moreover, in the correctness of the report, and allowed his justification from the British charge of "making away" to rest mainly on the accuracy of Perry's report, which contained no such allegation. Under these circumstances, and without any evidence that these questions were put by any other than Captain Elliott, it is not surprising that I should have fallen into this slight mistake, which the copy of the record in Commodore Elliott's Life does not even now afford the means of correcting. Still, I will not hesitate to make the correction on the faith of Mr. Cooper's statement, and to express my regret at having inadvertently done Captain Elliott injustice in this particular.

With regard to Mr. Cooper's allegation, that I contradict my own witnesses in stating that the first shot was fired by the British flag-ship Detroit at the Lawrence, at a distance

of a mile and a half, whereas those witnesses say that the action began at the distance of a mile, I have to state, that my belief that the two squadrons were not less than one and a half miles apart when the action commenced, was mainly founded on the supposition that the distance could not have been less, when a shot from a long twenty-four-pounder did not take effect. Five minutes elapsed before the Detroit fired again, when the shot did take effect. It was still five minutes later when the Lawrence first fired from her long twelve pounder, after which the Scorpion and Ariel were ordered by trumpet to commence firing with their long guns. I presume it is not likely that the squadrons could have been less than a mile apart when the Lawrence and schooners thus commenced returning the British fire. At meridian, a quarter of an hour after the first shot was fired from the Detroit, at a distance, as I have supposed, from the Lawrence of a mile and a half, the Lawrence luffed-to and fired her carronades of the first division on the starboard side, and finding her shot still did not tell, she bore away again without attempting to fire a carronade until a quarter of an hour later, when, being, as I suppose, within half a mile of the enemy, she again rounded-to and fired her whole broadside, and again bore away until within canister range. I think the distance I have mentioned for the first shot of the Detroit corresponds best with the different dates and corresponding occurrences. With the same view of making dates and distances correspond with each other, and the alleged rate of sailing of between two and three knots an hour, I have altered the distance of the two squadrons at ten o'clock, given by Mr. Taylor as nine miles, to six miles; because I could not otherwise account for our squadron, sailing, as it is said to have done, at the rate of two and a half knots, being, at a quarter before meridian, even within a mile and a half of the enemy. If I had stated that the squadrons were nine miles apart at ten o'clock and only one mile apart at a quarter before meridian, that would

have involved alone a rate of sailing of more than four and a half knots an hour, without estimating the drift of the British squadron. The British ships were hove-to with their main-topsails to the mast. In order to preserve the line and the respective distances, they must necessarily have been kept ranging ahead by steering a little off, and not been hove dead-to. Under these circumstances, they could not, even with a breeze that had brought the American squadron eight knots in an hour and three quarters, have run and driven together, at the lowest calculation, less than a knot an hour, which would make a mile and three quarters to be added to the eight knots, by which the distance between the two squadrons had been diminished in an hour and three quarters, making, in all, nine and three quarter miles run by our squadron from ten o'clock to a quarter before meridian, or somewhat more than at the rate of five miles an hour. Now, if I had adopted these two statements as being correct, I must have given to our squadron a rate of sailing of more than five knots an hour, and, of course, have annihilated whatever excuse has been put forward for the Niagara's keeping out of close action on the score of want of wind. Yet Mr. Cooper, in investigating this subject, imputes to me a partial motive in altering the distance, when he introduces the subject by saying, "the question connected with the Lake Erie controversy was one purely of distance." I may, on consultation with the surviving officers of the Lake Erie squadron, restore the distances as given by Mr. Taylor, if they, on mature consideration, determine that my statement is erroneous; but, if I do so, I must give to our squadron a rate of sailing of more than five knots an hour, and thereby increase the culpability of the Niagara in not allowing the same wind that carried the Lawrence so quickly and so gallantly into close action, to carry her into it also. This may be a proper place to say, in defence of that Life of Perry which Mr. Cooper sneers at, denounces, and condemns, and the public with it, for read-

ing it, according to his account, so extensively and confidently, though he has himself used it, when it suited his purpose, to the extent almost of piracy, in his own pretended biography of Perry, which might be more properly denominated a defence and eulogy of Elliott, that I have called in vain on many of the surviving officers of the Lake Erie squadron to point out a single error, with a view to its correction, and that they have, on the contrary, borne flattering, and, to me, most grateful testimony to its minute fidelity.

Another important objection offered by Mr. Cooper to the Life of Perry is, that I have only made use of the testimony on one side in the controversy about the Niagara's share in the battle of Lake Erie. Mr. Cooper contends that the testimony on the other side, that of the officers of the Niagara, is the best that the case afforded. The commissioned officers of the Niagara undertook, on the 13th of October, 1813, to give a detailed account of the battle of Lake Erie, in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy: it is too long for insertion, but its preamble may be given as a specimen of the impulse under which it was written. "We have, with regret, seen the condensed, and, suffer us to add, the partial statements of the late action on Lake Erie, and, induced by motives of the warmest admiration and greatest respect for our commander, Captain J. D. Elliott, we take the liberty of laying before you our combined observations on the above late action; and knowing, as we do, your power of discrimination and impartiality of judgment, we commit it to you with full confidence of its universal evidence and consideration." The letter concludes with the assurance, "we have endeavoured, sir, to give you a succinct and minute account of the action from the commencement to the close." And yet, will the reader believe it, not one word is said in this "succinct and minute account of the action from the commencement to the close," embracing the "combined observations" of these commissioned officers, of the Niagara's bearing down after Perry took command of her, and break-

ing the enemy's line. Not one word is said by them of the Niagara taking any part in the battle from the moment Captain Elliott left her, while from that same moment the interest of the battle, so far as it fell under their "combined observations," followed his person, and they describe him as bearing off the victory, by his prowess, in the following words: "The Lawrence, some time previous to this, had dropped astern, much shattered and useless. Captain Perry left her and came on board the Niagara; he observed to Captain Elliott that he apprehended that the action was lost, who, with the spirit and promptitude we have been accustomed to see him exert, replied, 'No, sir, I will yet try and save the day:' he accordingly repaired on board, and taking the direction of one of the small vessels, brought the whole of them into action at close musket shot: the consequence was, that in ten minutes the Detroit and Queen Charlotte struck to us, and soon after the whole of the enemy's squadron followed their example." So the victory on Lake Erie was the consequence of Captain Elliott's going on board of one of the four small vessels at the rear of the American line, and which were coming rapidly up, and had nothing to do with the Niagara's breaking the enemy's line and raking them from both broadsides within pistol shot.

So, again, with Mr. Magrath's testimony. He, too, gave an account of the battle of Lake Erie, portions of which Mr. Cooper introduces with the following eulogy: "But Mr. Magrath was probably the best witness of which the case admitted. He was a seaman, stood by Captain Elliott's side, and gives his testimony like a man of sense, with distinctness and moderation." Will the reader believe, after this, that Mr. Magrath also ascribes the victory solely to Captain Elliott, in the following terms? "Captain Elliott's volunteering to bring into close action all our small vessels, which was nobly and heroically executed, aided by the exertions of their commanders, produced the brilliant victory which warms with just pride the bosom of every American."

Here, no more than in the letter, containing the "combined observations" of the commissioned officers of the Niagara, of whom Mr. Magrath was one, do we find any mention of the Niagara breaking the enemy's line : on the contrary, the victory was produced, according to Mr. Magrath, by Captain Elliott's bringing up the small vessels. Yet Mr. Cooper says, "I look upon Mr. Magrath's as the true version of the battle." I differ from Mr. Cooper altogether. Mr. Cooper, indeed, differs not a little from himself. Even he does not attempt with these witnesses, whom he eulogizes, to smuggle out of view the important fact of the Niagara's breaking the line. So, also, with regard to the testimony of Dr. Barton, which Mr. Cooper condemns me for not giving heed to, under the head of "he constantly contradicts the best evidence the case allows, on altogether insufficient grounds." He quotes Dr. Barton as testifying as follows : "The number of wounded on board the Niagara has been falsely estimated at twenty, and it has been stated that only one or two were wounded previous to Captain Perry's going on board. The exact number, including the dangerously or severely wounded, was twenty-seven, and the slight cases not reported must have amounted to six or eight more. Five were killed during the action, and a few died soon after : one man was mortally wounded on the berth-deck, very early in the contest, by a shot, which passed through both sides of the vessel." Mr. Cooper praises Dr. Barton's testimony in his pamphlet without stint. He says of him, "As respects the wounded, he was the best evidence of which the case admitted." Again, "He is evidently a man who states with proper caution, and one who wishes to say no more than the occasion called for." In the appendix to his pamphlet he recurs to this evidence of Dr. Barton with inveterate wrongheadedness. "Two accounts," he says, "of the loss of the Niagara have been given : that of the official report, and that of her own surgeon. On the part of Commodore Elliott, it is affirmed that the returns on which Perry re-



ported were given in by Dr. Parsons, and that he endeavoured to lessen the loss of this brig, under the influence of the feeling he so early manifested. Dr. Barton affirms that five men were killed, whereas the official reports puts this number at two. The following circumstances render it probable that Dr. Barton was right. This gentleman speaks of a man who was mortally wounded in a hammock before his own eyes. Add this man to the two *sworn* to by Mr. Webster, and we get more than all contained in the official report. Dr. Barton, moreover, the permanent medical officer of the Niagara, would be more apt to get the facts from a scattered crew, in the long run, than Dr. Parsons, whose account, even supposing him uninfluenced by feeling, as he clearly was not by his own showing, was made out in time for a report written three days after the action."

Here is a distinct allegation that Dr. Parsons made the return of the killed and wounded on board the Niagara, and that, under the influence of a partial feeling, he fraudulently departed from the truth in order to disparage Captain Elliott. Fortunately, the means of vindicating this high-minded gentleman from so atrocious a calumny are at hand. On what authority does the reader suppose that the return of killed and wounded, accompanying Commodore Perry's official report, and containing the name and rank of every individual killed or wounded in the squadron, was founded, so far as the Niagara was concerned? was it on a return drawn up and signed by the partial Dr. Parsons? No. It is a verbatim copy of the original return from the Niagara, now in my possession, and signed H. Magrath, purser, and Jesse D. Elliott, commandant, of whom Mr. Cooper says, "On the part of Commodore Elliott, it is affirmed that the returns on which Perry reported were given in by Dr. Parsons."

Yet Mr. Cooper considers Dr. Barton's testimony "the best of which the case admitted," though he was sick at the time, made no returns, and gave his reminiscences many years after. Mr. Cooper elaborately substantiates Dr. Bar-

ton's evidence by a calculation founded on the evidence of Mr. Webster, and condemns me for rejecting all this and other similar evidence from the same sources, which he conceives the best, in order to follow what he deems of inferior credibility. I differ from Mr. Cooper on this subject as widely as I do as to the relative merits of Perry and Elliott in the battle of Lake Erie. The prejudiced and erroneous character of the testimony brought forward by Mr. Cooper, so glaringly exhibited in the above instance, and in others which I have pointed out, furnished reason enough why I should disregard it for the clear and consistent evidence on which I have founded my account of the battle of Lake Erie. Mr. Cooper might have seen the transactions in the same light that I have done, in common with the world generally, had he been uninfluenced by the inveterate love of paradoxes, or by other notions known only to himself.

If he is not misrepresented, the period is not yet very remote when he was as decided and declamatory in the denunciation of Elliott as he is now in his praise. After all, I do not find that these favourite witnesses of his controvert the most essential facts contained in my statement. They do not deny that the Niagara was within hail of the Lawrence when the battle commenced. They do not deny that the Niagara did not make all sail when the Lawrence did, and did not accompany her in closing with the enemy. They do not deny that the Niagara did not, throughout the action, engage at close quarters her designated antagonist, the Queen Charlotte. They do not deny that the Queen Charlotte, finding she could not engage the Niagara, passed ahead of the Hunter, in the British line, and united her fire with that of the Detroit upon the Lawrence. They do not deny that the Niagara was under topsails only, and had occasionally her main-topsail to the mast, and her jib brailed up, while the Lawrence was bearing down for the enemy under a press of sail. They do not deny that the Niagara had the Lawrence and Caledonia, during part of the

action, between her and the enemy. They do not deny that the Lawrence had been reduced to a wreck, while the Niagara had received, two and a half hours after the commencement of the action, but trifling injury. They do not deny that, when Perry got on board the Niagara, he immediately hove to, then bore up, altering his course a whole right angle to close with the enemy. How, then, have I dealt unfairly in not using testimony which, though laudatory of Captain Elliott, does not impugn a series of consistent and irresistible facts testified to by the unimpeached evidence of officers as honourable and honoured as any in the navy?

But how does Mr. Cooper himself deal with the unimpeached and unimpeachable evidence I have named? Adopting a reproach, which he has at second-hand from Captain Elliott's biography, he thus attempts to reason down the testimony of the gallant officers of the Lawrence: "Although the Americans actually captured every English vessel engaged against them, their own commanding ship struck her colours. This circumstance naturally gave rise to some feeling, and it is in proof that certain of the officers of this vessel were early engaged in looking up evidence to criminate Captain Elliott, to whose conduct they ascribed their own disaster." And again, "The Lawrence, after suffering very severely, *struck*; and this in a battle in which all the enemy were subsequently captured, and the Lawrence herself retaken. Whatever may have been the gallantry of her crew, and the circumstances which led to such a result, the tenth September, as regards the Lawrence, was a defeat. It is easy to see that men so circumstanced might not be rigidly just." Now, no one but Captain Elliott's biographer, and Mr. Cooper endorsing his opinions—for most of what Mr. Cooper now brings forward has not even the merit of originality, and may be found in that unique production, which Mr. Cooper pronounces "fairer in spirit, more logical, and every way more respectable than" the Life of Perry—ever conceived the idea that the officers of the

Lawrence had any occasion for self-reproach or mortification in connexion with the battle of Lake Erie. The Lawrence had borne the brunt of the engagement, had encountered her own antagonist, the Detroit, and the Queen Charlotte, the designated antagonist of the Niagara. Out of one hundred well officers and men who had gone into action, twenty-two were killed and sixty-one wounded. Every gun was disabled, the last serviceable one having only been loaded and discharged by the personal assistance of Perry himself, aided by his purser and chaplain. Perry had left the Lawrence to assume the command of the Niagara, and had got on board of her, and was bringing her into action. The Lawrence being thus entirely incapable of resistance, her colours were struck to spare the needless slaughter of the wounded officers and men. The Lawrence had suffered most, had been the most closely engaged, had contributed most essentially to the victory ; what occasion had *her* officers to feel jealous of those of the *Niagara*, who had only been closely engaged at the close of the battle under the command of Perry ? They might have felt irritation at her keeping so long out of action, shame at her abandonment of her consort to the added attack of her own designated antagonist, resentment at the needless sacrifice of so many of their shipmates, but no jealousy.

On account of this jealousy of his own and Captain Elliott's imagining, Mr. Cooper attempts to reason down the testimony of the officers of the Lawrence, and, still farther to disparage them, gets rid of two officers, next in rank on board of her to Perry, in the following summary manner : " Mr. Forrest, I understand, was a man of very feeble capacity, as was Mr. Yarnall, the other lieutenant of the Lawrence, and it may be some excuse for him, that he did not thoroughly comprehend what he was about."

After a somewhat similar process, he next gets rid of other gentlemen of the highest respectability : " Messrs. Parsons, Breese, Taylor, Champlin, and Brownell, all ap-

pear to have been natives of Rhode Island, and to have accompanied Perry when he left that state ; and Mr. Turner, though a native of New-York, had been a resident of Rhode Island from childhood, and was almost identified with the family of Perry by long and intimate association." All these gentlemen, guilty of being born in Rhode Island, and Mr. Turner, guilty only of the inferior offence of residence and intimacy with Perry's family, are disparaged as witnesses by Mr. Cooper. Some persons might think that the respect, confidence, and enthusiastic attachment with which Perry inspired all who were closely associated with him, was an additional pledge as well of his worth as of theirs. Even admitting, however, that there is any validity in Mr. Cooper's charge of jealousy against the officers of the Lawrence, however absurd on the face of it, and equally setting aside their testimony and that of the officers of the Niagara, and referring the question to the decision of the commanders of the other American vessels, we find them corroborating, with singular unanimity and coincidence, the account which I have given of the battle of Lake Erie.

What, then, is the amount, what the provocation, and what the object of Mr. Cooper's scurrilous attack upon me ? The amount of it is, that he heaps mountains of abuse upon me under the head of charges, which he attempts to substantiate, by pointing out, in two volumes consisting of nearly six hundred pages, one error of fact which I have accounted for, and will cheerfully correct, and another alteration from the existing testimony made on the faith of careful nautical computation, and which alteration of distance deprived me of an additional argument against Captain Elliott, though Mr. Cooper vaguely intimates that the alteration was made for the purpose of injuring him ; charging me with alleged use of the worst evidence the case affords in preference to the best, according to Mr. Cooper's apprehension of what is the worst and what the best, of which it is only necessary to say that it is as heterodoxical and decided.

ly opposed to prevailing opinions as most of this gentleman's apprehensions are. Such is the amount of Mr. Cooper's accusations ; such is the slender basis on which he has erected a superstructure of vulgar vituperation, extending through the greater part of more than a hundred pages.

As to the provocation I have given Mr. Cooper, I know not in what it consists, unless it be that, while Mr. Cooper, in three years of eager research, has only been able to detect one error in my two volumes of the *Life of Perry*, I casually discovered and pointed out, within the compass of a few pages of *the Naval History*, near a dozen palpable misstatements, many of which were against Perry, and not one of them in his favour. The following are the misstatements in question, which are here introduced to show in what manner the *Naval History* of Mr. Cooper compares with my *Life of Perry* in point of accuracy, and how much of injustice as well as bad taste there was in his assault. Mr. Cooper says, p. 370, vol. ii. of his *Naval History*, "About this time, too, Captain Perry made an application to be relieved from the command on the upper lakes, complaining of the qualities of the crews of the vessels he commanded." It was wholly untrue that Perry offered to relinquish his command on account of the unsatisfactory quality of his crews ; he earnestly requested to be relieved on the specific ground that he conceived himself insulted in an official letter he had received from his senior officer on the lakes. Though this charge of Mr. Cooper's was untrue, and the means were within his reach of discovering its untruth, and though it was eminently suited to disparage and injure Perry, still I did not, in correcting it, impute intentional falsehood to Mr. Cooper, or make it the occasion of insult to him. On page 182, vol. ii., *Life of Perry*, I corrected, in a collective form, in a note relating to men sent to Lake Erie, the following errors of Mr. Cooper : "Mr. Cooper says, page 359, vol. ii., *Naval History*, there were eleven officers and one hundred men. There were only eighty-nine men. On the

previous page he says that Commodore Chauncey, soon after the third of July, felt himself strong enough to send one hundred and thirty men, with the necessary officers, to the upper lakes. There were eight officers and only one hundred and twenty-two men. Thus, in both instances, the number of men sent by Commodore Chauncey to Captain Perry is overstated by Mr. Cooper. Mr. Cooper misdates the appearance of the English squadron off the bar, and the sailing of ours. These events took place on the fifth and sixth of August respectively, instead of the fourth and fifth, as stated by him. He subsequently states that the American squadron sailed from Erie for Sandusky on the eighteenth of August, when it sailed on the twelfth. He stated previously that 'it was near the end of June' before Perry sailed from Buffalo for Erie with the five small vessels; whereas he sailed from Buffalo on the fourteenth, and arrived at Erie on the eighteenth of June. These errors are corrected, as dates are considered material in history."

So, in the reply I made in the *Evening Post* of the 7th April, 1841, to an article of Mr. Cooper's in that journal, putting the public on its guard against the inaccuracy and historical worthlessness of the *Life of Perry* until the appearance of his then forthcoming pamphlet, which was only destined to see the light some years after, because Mr. Cooper "bided his time," I thus took occasion to correct other inexcusably gross errors which I had noted at the time, but which I did not deem sufficiently material to the task in which I was engaged to correct. "Mr. Cooper states, on page 204, vol. ii., of his work, 'On the 23d September, the squadron conveyed a body of 1200 men to the vicinity of Malden, in Upper Canada, of which place they took possession; and on the 27th, Captain Perry ascended to Detroit in the *Ariel*,' and so on, with a consecutive account of the expedition which terminated in the battle of the Thames, fought, as inferrible from his account, by 1200 men. Now what are the facts of the case, easily deducible from any

contemporary history or newspaper which Mr. Cooper would have taken the trouble to consult? The army of General Harrison, to the number of 4500, was all assembled at Bass Island by the 22d of September. On the following morning, the transportation of the whole army to the Middle Sister Island, excepting the sick and a guard for the baggage, was commenced, and completed on the 26th. On the 27th, instead of the 23d, as stated by Mr. Cooper, the army, consisting of not less than 3500 men, instead of only 1200, was landed at Malden. An erroneous opinion is a comparatively innocent thing; even bad logic may carry with it its own correction; but a palpable misstatement of material facts is a matter of greater moment."

Here, no more than in the *Life of Perry*, is there any charge against Mr. Cooper of wilful misrepresentation; here is no vulgar abuse. I detect ten misstatements in his *Naval History* within the compass of a few pages, casually and without diligent search, for one that he has detected in the whole *Life of Perry*, after an investigation of three years' duration. In detecting his ten or more misstatements, I treat him with decorum; even Mr. Cooper admits it when he says, "So far as I am concerned, Captain Mackenzie has respected appearances a little." Mr. Cooper fastens upon a single misstatement of mine, and overwhelms me with scurrility. Can it be that I owe this to the one misstatement of mine that he was able to detect, or to the ten or more that I had the hardihood to point out within a few pages of his *Naval History*? If he had had more truth and justice on his side, and I had had less, is it not possible that he might have been more decorous and more gentlemanlike?

The following passage from the preface of Mr. Cooper's pamphlet may assist in the disentanglement of his motives: "For years the writer has submitted in comparative silence to a gross injustice in connexion with this matter, not from any want of confidence in the justice of his case, or any



ability to defend himself, but because he 'bided his time,' knowing, when that should arrive, he had truth to fall back upon. He has seen his own work condemned, and, so far as the public authorities were concerned, excluded from the district school libraries, and all on account of its supposed frauds in relation to the battle of Lake Erie ; while, on the other hand, he has heard Captain Mackenzie's biography of Perry lauded from one end of the Union to the other, and preferred to that place in the libraries mentioned, from which his own work has been excluded. The day of reckoning has come at length, and the judgment of men will infallibly follow."

Here, then, there is something specific. Mr. Cooper has had the moderation to submit, in comparative silence, for years to gross injustice, though he had truth to fall back upon, "because he bided his time;" he has seen his own work condemned, and excluded from school libraries on account of alleged frauds, while he has had to listen quietly and hear Captain Mackenzie's biography lauded from one end of the Union to the other ; nay, worse and more difficult, *hear it preferred* to the libraries from which his own work had been excluded. This, truly, was aggravating ; this was too much even for the amiability and generosity of Mr. Cooper.

The course of Mr. Cooper, in attempting to disparage Perry and elevate Elliott, is so unaccountable on the face of it, that it is not wonderful that we should find him defending himself beforehand from the imputation of improper incentive. "A great clamour," he says, "has thus been raised against Captain Elliott, under the influence of party feeling, and while one half of the nation has been made to immolate him without examination, the other has not shown a disposition to defend. I cannot see why others might not have detected the character of most of the evidence on which this has been done as well as myself." If Mr. Cooper cannot see why, it must remain inexplicable. Again, "What

motive could I have for not joining in the cry against Commodore Elliott beyond a wish to tell the truth? Is it politics? When and where have I sought political favour? It has been well known to my friends that, for years and years, I have uniformly declared no probable inducement could tempt me to hold office under the people and government of this country." When Mr. Cooper asks us what motive he can have for advocating his paradoxes, he must answer his own questions. We can only know as much on these subjects as he may think proper to tell us.

The following information, communicated by Mr. Cooper himself, is certainly not suited to diminish the wonder occasioned by the extraordinary course he has adopted with regard to the battle of Lake Erie: "It is often urged to the writer, that most of the officers of the navy are of opinion against Commodore Elliott's conduct in the battle of Lake Erie. This is probably true; it certainly is among the writer's acquaintances. But what is an opinion worth, when the party is ignorant of facts?" Here, then, we find the navy as well as the country pronouncing itself with singular unanimity on one side, and Mr. Cooper alone on the other. But what is an opinion worth, quoth Mr. Cooper, to the American world, naval and civil, when you know nothing of the facts? Here, then, Mr. Cooper pretends to monopolize all the wisdom of the country on a subject which has been much agitated for many years: in another paragraph we may see him laying claim, with equal boldness, to all its honesty: "The truth is not to be concealed, a man is much safer among us by the frank avowal of a tolerably corrupt motive, than by pretending to principle, there being a prevalent indisposition to believe in the existence of the latter."

Is not this a dangerous doctrine from the mouth of a dogmatical public instructor, who uniformly disparages popular opinion, and professes to be in advance of his age? Is not the man who tramples on the old adage, that "honesty

is the best policy," and puts forward the new dogma, that "a man is much safer among us by the frank avowal of a tolerably corrupt motive," in some danger of going astray? Is Mr. Cooper, after all, not merely the only wise man in the country, but also the only true, pure, upright, honest, and honourable one? If so, we fear that, with such dogmas, he also may become a castaway. His present undertaking shows him at least to be already "smit" with something else besides "the love of honourable deeds." Having traduced his own countrymen, and even countrywomen, and misrepresented and defamed Perry in order to elevate Elliott, he has, at length, gone so far in his pamphlet, as in one sense to liken this last to the father of his country, of whom he has the hardihood to say, that if he were similarly judged, it might be possible "to demonstrate that even Washington was a desperate adventurer, and a man without morals." To demonstrate this is now the only task left to add to the notoriety of Mr. Cooper.

Even Mr. Cooper's modesty, however, seems to indicate that some apology is due to public decency for his last outbreak of violence and vulgarity. Of the value as well as courtesy of his apology, let the public, to whom it is offered, judge: "This controversy was not of my seeking: for years have I rested under the imputations that these persons have brought against me, and I now strike a blow in behalf of truth, not from any deference to a public opinion that, in my judgment, has not honesty enough to feel much interest in the exposure of duplicity and artifice, but that my children may point to the facts with just pride that they had a father who dared to stem popular prejudice in order to write truth."

Never was the sacred name of truth more sacrilegiously taken in vain; and she will surely vindicate her violated name by the opposite of what Mr. Cooper anticipates. He will find himself as much mistaken with regard to the future as he has usually been with respect to the present and the

past ; and those who come after him will rather lament the melancholy hallucination under which he has laboured in this crowning effort towards reversing himself from that proud eminence in the estimation of his countrymen, upon which they would so readily have enthroned him. He will now be best remembered as the traducer of his country, the inveterate assailant of its best-founded pride, its pride of naval achievement : his most conspicuous title to unenviable renown will be founded on his attempt to assassinate the memory of Perry. There is, however, some consolation for the afflicted friends of Mr. Cooper. If he is madder now than when he wrote *The Naval History* ; if his monomania has rapidly gained strength, he is yet not nearly so mad as when he believed in the celebrated conspiracy between the French government and certain editors of the United States to put him down on account of his irresistible advocacy of American liberty.

Since Mr. Cooper has so pointedly invited public attention to the investigation of his motives in putting forth his pamphlet, it is impossible not to remark its coincidence in one particular with his remarkable letter to his countrymen in 1834. In that letter, the investigation of the ever-memorable royal and editorial conspiracy was enlivened by a well-timed discussion of "the removal of the deposits." In the pamphlet he has contrived, with equal appropriateness and good taste, to enrich his pages with abundant allusions to the case of the Somers. The hook that was baited with the removal of the deposits caught no fish : it remains to be seen what will be the result of the "experiment to obtain capital" from the Somers case. If some worthy associates may have found this path a ready one to preferment, why should not Mr. Cooper bring his higher-priced wares to assure a market ? He has "bided his time !" Let any one consider the coincidence of circumstances under which the first insolent announcement of his pamphlet was made, and observe how completely it calls up the image of the assassin

lurking in ambush, and watching the moment to take his enemy unawares.

But Mr. Cooper gravely assures us, as if something very tempting had been already offered to him, "It has been well known to my friends that, for years and years, I have uniformly declared that no probable inducement could *tempt* me to hold office under the people or government of this country." But, then, in his remarkable epistle to his countrymen, which partakes of the nature of a valedictory, he very solemnly takes leave of his countrymen, and intimates to them that they shall hear from him no more. Since then, however, Mr. Cooper has inflicted on them *Homeward Bound*, *Home as Found*, the *Monnekins*, and *The Naval History*. And we now find him, after having disparaged his own country, with characteristic inconsistency and contentiousness, entering into controversies in newspapers and reviews to defend himself against foreigners who have used him as a witness against his native land. If his countrymen, with all their sensitiveness to foreign ridicule, could not be very deeply wounded by the efforts of one of their own number to show how far their manners, air, and style of living sunk beneath that standard of aristocratic elegance which he had formed for himself in Europe, there was yet one venerated object of national pride through which the country might be assailed, its pride of naval glory; there was one, of many venerated names, through which the whole nation might be calumniated, and that was Perry.

Having been thus tempted before to forego a publicly announced intention, in order to appear as the assailant of his country, might not Mr. Cooper once more absolve himself from his vow, should the opportunity offer of "holding office under the people or government of this country?" Might not an access of returning patriotism, uniting with a lively sense of his own exceeding fitness to serve his country, impel him to lay his scruples on its altar?

There seems, however, to be such an insufficient sense

of Mr. Cooper's extraordinary merits entertained in every quarter, that he is likely to be as entirely neglected by the higher powers as he is by the public, so much so, as to be driven to seek, in the circulation of a popular magazine, and under the pretext, how upright let every one judge, of drawing a faithful portrait "of Perry's acts and character," the means of obtaining a hearing for his calumnies, and, at last, to be perhaps indebted even to the charity of this notice to rescue him from complete neglect.

ALEX. SLIDELL MACKENZIE.

*Tarrytown, November, 1843.*

THE END.

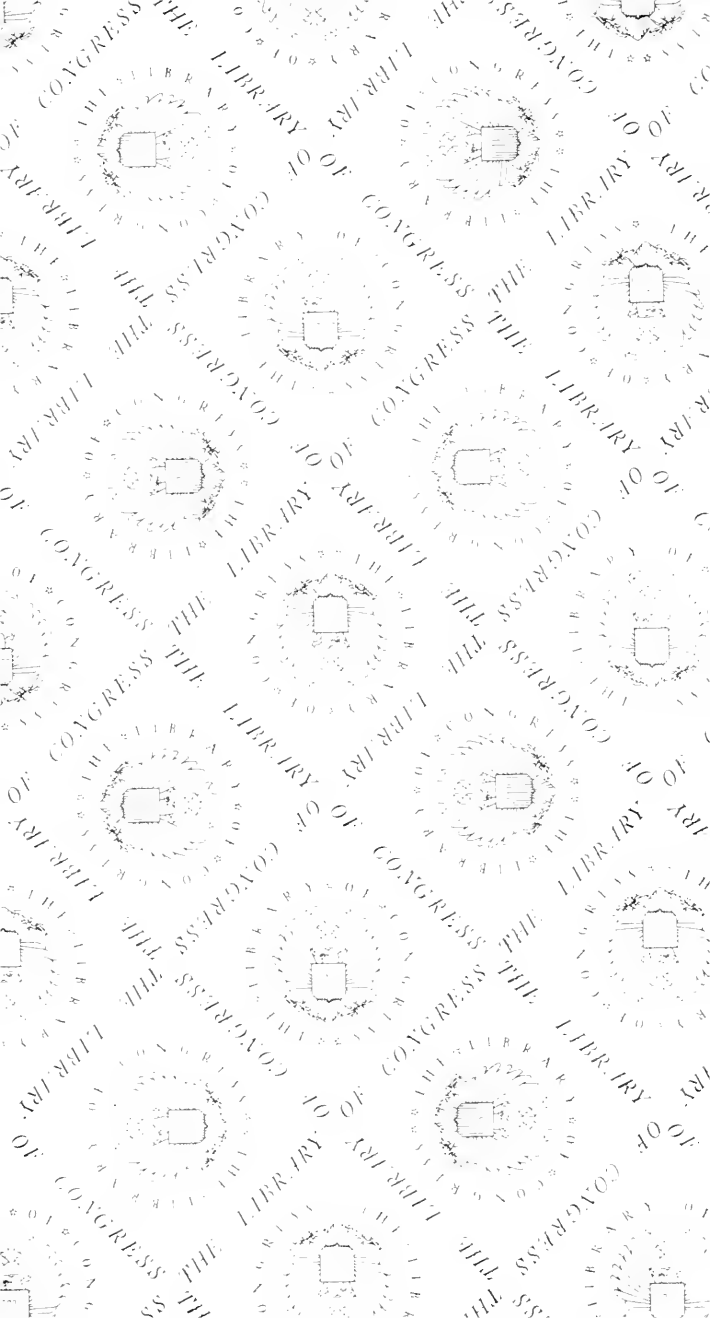












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